

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

Yesterday, however, Mr Major was in confident form at the first of a series of White House-style press conferences. The three great issues for the election would be the economy, Europe and Labour's plans for constitutional reform, he said. He promised to pilot the economy to success.

**THE WOMAN
WHO CAUGHT
ATHERTON**
Simon
Barnes
PAGE 46



Mr Ritchie's wife, Jill, a primary school teacher in Harwich, Essex, said that she had not yet come to terms with the 6.45am telephone call from her husband to break the news. He had had more difficulty with his 78-year-old Glaswegian mother, Chris.



Richard Branson, with all



the final checks made, wave



farewell to his wife, Joan

£50

turn ticket and
th you for only...



Trackers' task, page 3
High adventure, page 15
Leading articles
and letters, page 17



By EDWARD GORMAN IN LONDON AND ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

low-level passes by the RAAF Orion aircraft, the organisers of the Vendée Globe single-handed non-stop round-the-world race believe that he is inside the hull and alive.

Philippe Jeantot, the race director, said in Paris that Bullimore had three emergency radio beacons on board his 60ft yacht. One was on deck in a box next to his survival kit and the liferaft. This had not been switched on, suggesting Bullimore had not tried to use his liferaft. The second is also on deck and is working, but was transmitting in normal mode. This is giving a position about 15 miles from the up-

turned hull yesterday, suggesting it may have been ripped off when the boat capsized.

The third is inside the boat and it is this one which Bullmore has switched on to alarm mode after the capsizing, something which can only be done manually, indicating very strongly that he is sheltering inside the hull.

The Australian navy frigate *Adelaide*, which is steaming to the area, has been slowed by the difficult conditions. The plan is to launch the ship's helicopter as soon as it is in range and try to pick up the men.

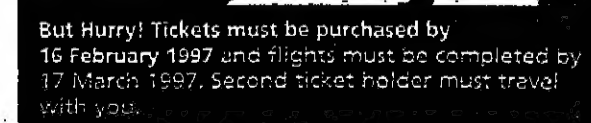
FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

Democrats said later that they regarded him as damaged goods, and that his position would be further undermined during the next two weeks, as ethics committee hearings reveal further details of charges against him.

majority of those present, he did not get a majority of the total 435 members of the House. But a Democratic challenge on those grounds was rejected by the clerk of the House.

Gingrich apology, page 10

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debonair 

Campaign chiefs from all parties have pencilled in three election options

Major plays the tease over his date with voters

By Philip Webster and Arthur Leathley

CAMPAIGN planners in all the political parties have ringed three possible general election dates on their calendars. If the poll is not held on March 20, April 10 or May 1, John Major will have again surprised them all.

Yesterday the Prime Minister predicted that, when the time came, it would be a "lot of fun". And he teased that "a bit of pleasure deferred is a greater pleasure", without intending any hint as to the day he will choose. The three dates have their supporters at all levels of his party.

In recent weeks Tory strategists, Cabinet ministers and backbenchers have been heard stoutly defending the merits of them all. If anything, the April 10 option appears to be hardening at Conservative Central Office: equally there is nothing to suggest that Mr Major has moved from his personal preference of May 1.

Each date appears to have its attractions for leading Tories, whether they are pessimistic or optimistic about their chances. Optimists such as Mr Major favour May 1 because it offers the longest possible time to maximise the attack on Labour. The pessimists believe that a poll then is the only way of saving the remnants of the Tory local

government base: local elections are on the same day and a general election will at least bring out activists who might not bother if the party is already out of government.

The March 20 optionists believe that Mr Major can retain control of events, by going at a time of his choosing rather than having to hold on to the last possible moment. The pessimists feel that, given the record of recent years, the longer the Parliament goes the worse it will be for the Tories.

An important factor is the meeting of the Conservative Central Council — the second most important Tory gathering of the year — in Bath on March 14 and 15. If an election has not been called by then, Mr Major will be under huge pressure to spell out his intentions.

By the end of February he could have called an election for April 10 and be able to use the council as a rallying point during the campaign. Alternatively he could announce a May 1 poll and use the meeting as a springboard for a six-week campaign.

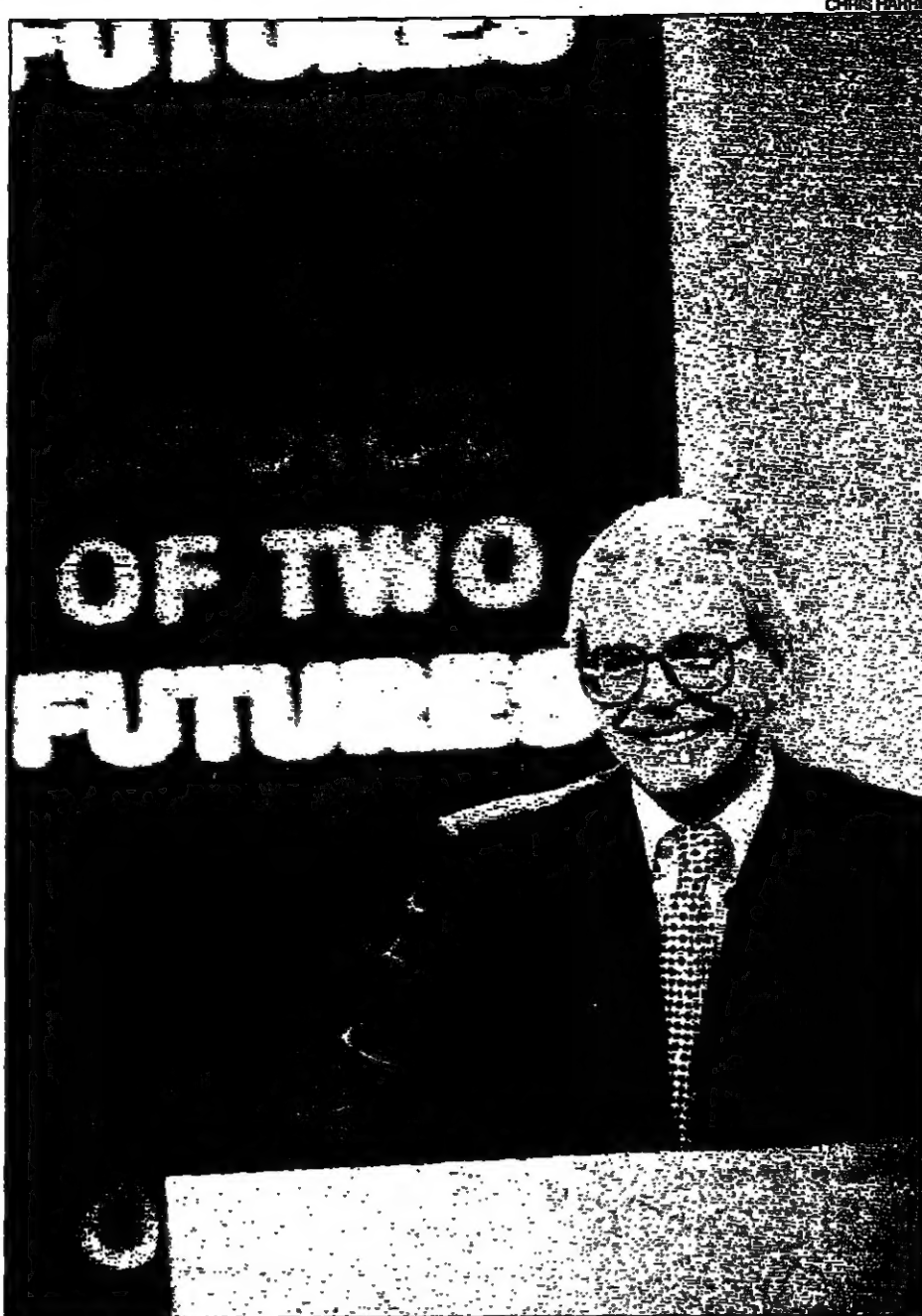
The keenest interest in the dates is being shown by the Tory leadership contenders and their coteries. If the Tories lose, the date will be crucial to whether a leader-

ship election is held swiftly or left until the autumn. Supporters of John Redwood, who challenged Mr Major in 1995, believe that their man will have the best chance in a poll before the summer recess.

If the Tories lose heavily, Mr Major might want to go quickly, but party elders will want him to hang on until the autumn to allow for an orderly transition and other candidates to get their campaigns running. A Tory party leadership election cannot take place until at least three months after the assembly of the new Parliament. If the general election is on March 20, Parliament would assemble very early in April, allowing for a new Tory leader to be chosen in July.

The "Stop Redwood" Tories might therefore prefer a later date: April 10 or May 1 would almost certainly rule out a leadership contest before the summer recess. Stephen Dorrell, Michael Howard, Malcolm Rifkind, Michael Portillo, Michael Heseltine, Gillian Shephard and Kenneth Clarke would have a busier holiday than usual.

Mr Major had no such thoughts yesterday. He said that he was looking forward to the next campaign after five more years in government.



Will it be March, April or May? An ebullient John Major kept the country guessing yesterday at the first of his presidential-style press conferences

MARCH 20

FOR John Major looks to be in charge of events and, by starting the campaign almost immediately, he can build up momentum seamlessly. Reduces Labour opportunities for using the breakdown of MPs' pairing arrangements in the Commons to inflict defeats and even force a confidence vote. Counters suggestions that Tories are "running scared" and spikes guns of Opposition parties demanding a by-election in Wirral South, which has been vacant since November. Pessimists warn that dragging on until May will alienate floating voters and increase margin of Tory defeat. Introduces an element of surprise, albeit mild.

AGAINST Election defeat in March or April would deter Tory activists from campaigning towards May 1 elections for local councils, where party is already at an all-time low. Early dissolution of Parliament could sabotage key pieces of contentious legislation such as the Firearms Bill, Police (Sentences) Bill, and even the Budget-enacting Finance Bill if they face serious opposition and run out of Parliamentary time. Poor weather likely to blight campaign and deter elderly voters — who are more likely to vote Tory — from turning out to polling stations. Would force the party to cancel Conservative Central Council meeting planned for March 14 and 15.

APRIL 10

FOR Expected to reduce Labour-dominated student vote in several key Tory marginals as undergraduates are at home during the Easter holiday. Allows John Major to use the mid-March Conservative Central Council meeting as a springboard to the campaign. Such a move would mirror the tactics of the 1992 general election, when Mr Major used the Central Council as the campaign launchpad days after announcing the election date. Allows lengthy election campaign and the hope of echoing the success of April 9 in 1992, in which Major's campaigning tactics helped to confound pollsters' predictions of a Labour victory. If called early enough, say the beginning of March, would snuff out rising Opposition demands for a by-election to be held in the vacant Wirral South.

AGAINST Will come as millions of home-owners on annually reviewed mortgages receive higher bills, negating "feel-good" factor. Defeat in March or April threatens a double-whammy in sapping Tory morale in advance of May 1 local elections, in which the party will start from a low point after the corresponding 1993 council poll. Some strategists argue that fears over the local elections are defeatist. Senior Tories are nervous about the effectiveness of campaigning around Easter, when many voters are away on holiday.

MAY 1

FOR Pessimists expecting a big Tory defeat favour this date as the way of getting out Tory voters for local elections on the same day and preventing a Conservative wipe-out in town halls. Stretches resources of the Liberal Democrats, who face heavy commitments defending council seats, limiting their ability to concentrate on "target" parliamentary seats. Optimists say the date offers maximum time for expected economic improvement to show. Will come after voters receive first benefits of income tax cuts in April pay packets. Gives Government more time to complete legislative programme. Better weather for campaigning and encouraging voters to turn out.

AGAINST Interest rate rises expected over coming two months will have fed through to mortgages during late March and April. Europe will become a more dominant, and potentially divisive issue as European Union leaders prepare for the Amsterdam summit in June. John Major would be seen as taking almost the last possible date, reinforcing the image of a beleaguered government clinging on for dear life. The longer he delays an election, the more likely he is to go into a Commons minority, whether by death or defection. Labour pressure for Wirral South by-election will have intensified in the run-up to the campaign.

Lack of inspiration evident in echoes of past failure

THE Tories could hardly say "better the devil you know" after their demonic eyes poster last summer. But that was the essence of the long pre-election campaign they launched yesterday. Contrasting the Tories' record and experience with the uncertainties and dangers of an untried Labour team may register with voters. It might not be a bad case for a Government seeking a second, or even third, term, but I doubt if it will be sufficient for one wanting an unprecedented fifth successive term.

John Major personifies the strengths and weaknesses of

the Tory appeal. He gave a confident and relaxed performance in the first of his pre-election press conferences. He was the pragmatic manager, the man who knows how to cope with the vicissitudes of an unpredictable world. He was persuasive on Northern Ireland, Europe and the economy. He is always better as the reasonable head of government than as the sometimes strident party leader.

Mr Major presented his Stanley Baldwin side, the safe pair of hands. Indeed, there were clear echoes of Baldwin's "Safety First" slogan during

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

the 1929 election in the Tories' talk yesterday about ensuring that "stability and prosperity" continue. The snag is that this can sound complacent. After all, the Tories lost in 1929.

Admittedly, the new Tory poster campaign, "New Labour, it would all end in tears", highlights the Opposition's vulnerability on tax and public spending and on constitutional reform. It is a legitimate question to ask whether a Blair government would take

the tough economic decisions that the Tories implemented.

But managerialism is not enough. The Tories lost the benefit of the doubt with the public after the trauma that followed Black Wednesday. The Tories cannot just rely on fear of the unknown — "smiles not tears". Mr Major was coy about his plans for the next Parliament, saying they would emerge later. He has previously said that ordinary voters are not interested in the radical ideas that fascinate the

pundits but primarily want competence and stability.

These objectives are obviously a pre-condition for any government's success, but the Tories need to offer more positive reasons for keeping the party in office. How would the party use power? Mr Major noted yesterday that it had been "hellishly difficult" to cut public spending and more unpopular decisions would be needed. But what does this mean for the welfare state? Would a re-elected Tory Government challenge spending programmes which particularly benefit the middle

classes? How far would it extend choice in schools?

In short, what has been missing in Mr Major's recent performances — and in the Tory campaign — is a spark of inspiration and excitement, an answer to the "time for a change" argument. It is not enough for Mr Major to claim that good times have at last come and they should not be put at risk now. The public needs to have an idea of what a Tory Britain would be like in five years' time. More of the same is not enough.

PETER RIDDELL

From No 10 to Bustee No 162 as PM plays the great game

By Christopher Thomas in Delhi and Philip Webster, Political Editor

FROM Calcutta to the Khyber, people are preparing for John Major. The Prime Minister will risk the inevitable "Carry On" headlines when he visits the Khyber Pass, gateway to the Indian subcontinent, as part of his six-day tour of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, which starts today.

In Calcutta he will see a collection of uncommonly smart huts known as Bustee Number 162 just off Picnic Garden in Kipling's City of Darkest Night, whose residents are being taught "Good morning, sir" and "Thank you".

These are no ordinary huts: there are no festering rubbish tips here, no rats, no sinking drains. The British taxpayer, through the Overseas Development Administration, has been funding a beautification drive. Mr Major may catch a whiff of the real city beyond, but he will not be allowed to see it at close hand.

Next week he will head to the Khyber Pass in Pakistan. The tribesmen he will see lugging rifles through the dusty village streets know nothing but tribal law; they are aggressive, independent and acutely aware of their role in defeating the British when they foolishly ventured beyond the Khyber into Afghanistan in the last century.

This is the heart of the Great Game, as Kipling called the battle for influence between Russia and Britain. It still bears the insignia of British regiments painted on the rocks, survivors of sand storms, monsoons and heat. This is where invaders poured into India for centuries, from Afghanistan, and Central Asia: a gateway to war. Mr Major might spot a rabbit skin swinging outside one or two shophouses, inside, slabs of marijuana as big as loaves will be on sale.

If he had more time he might take a trip to the nearby town of Datta, where Afriidi tribesmen make copies of Kalashnikovs, handguns, rocket launchers and other weapons for terrorist wars around the region.

Mr Major leaves London equipped with nothing more threatening than an army of business people, although there will be more of them than have ever accompanied the Prime Minister before. The 50-strong team will include Sir Iain Vallance, of BT; Robert Ayling, of British Airways; and Adair Turner, Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry, as well as Jan Lang, the President of the Board of Trade.

In Calcutta tomorrow Mr Major is expected to address an audience of 10,000 delegates at a Confederation of Indian Industry conference. The Prime Minister has surprised many of his political and government advisers by taking off on a long-distance trip with the

election possibly only weeks away and his backbench troops deeply uneasy about their prospects. But Downing Street officials made plain that Mr Major wanted to continue his efforts to improve Britain's trade links and play an early part in this year's celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of India and Pakistan's independence.

His visit to Pakistan comes at a deeply sensitive time, with elections pending after the ousting of Benazir Bhutto's government. Mr Major is determined to take an even-handed approach and is expected to meet Mrs Bhutto's main rival, Nawaz Sharif, the former prime minister, and Neraiz Khalid, the caretaker prime minister.

There are no plans for Mr Major to see another of the candidates in the Pakistani election: Imran Khan, the former Test cricketer and son-in-law of Sir James Goldsmith, leader of the Referendum Party.

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The Khyber Pass looking towards Afghanistan, where John Major may meet armed tribesmen

Britain urged to give ground in EU talks

From Charles Bremner in the Hague

JOHN MAJOR was urged by European leaders last night to press ahead with negotiations for revamping the European Union treaty or face blame for undermining its historic mission to take in the countries of the former Communist bloc.

The message of urgency was emphasised repeatedly by Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, as Mr Major arrived for talks with Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister. Mr Kok, who has just taken over the chair of the EU's rotating presidency, was seeking to persuade Mr Major to give some ground at the inter-governmental conference (IGC), the negotiation to re-amp the Maastricht treaty. The EU is worried that the



Santer: sticking to his enlargement strategy

British elections could make it impossible to finish the treaty until late in the year.

"We want to negotiate very seriously with the British Government in the few months ahead of us," Mr Kok said.

"We are not going to just sit back and wait to see what happens after the elections. We cannot afford the luxury of losing time."

The IGC is due to close with a new treaty at an Amsterdam summit in June, preparing the EU for expansion to take in up to 11 new members early in the next century. The treaty will start the countdown to membership talks within six months with countries from central Europe.

Mr Kok said that it would be "unforgivable" to imply that Britain was the only obstacle to completing the new treaty, because the other 14 states are widely divided on key issues. However, he and Mr Santer made clear that Britain was the main obstacle to a new treaty. Among other things, Britain is alone in

opposing any dilution of the national veto and measures to harmonise border and crime policy. Mr Major was telling Mr Kok that he was keeping all bridges open to the EU and Britain would stay active at the negotiations, but it would not yield on any of the demands which it has laid down.

Mr Santer noted that Europe had an historic mission to end the division created by the Cold War and embrace the countries to the east. He recalled that Britain was a strong supporter of enlargement. "We are sticking to the strategy of enlargement," he said. "This is the last chance. Let us not allow ourselves to become paralysed by elections in a member state."

Mr Kok said that he had invited Mr Major to try to find areas in which Britain could

negotiate to clear some of the IGC obstacles before the election. Formally launching the Dutch presidency of the EU, he promised to work for a new treaty that deepened integration in all fields, from employment policy to crime-fighting and foreign policy.

The key to the future shape of Europe would be machinery for a flexible union, he said. "It is necessary to prevent slower countries from holding back those that want to move ahead more quickly."

Mr Kok said he would tell Mr Major that he believed a multispeed scheme would answer British objections. The Government has given qualified support to such proposals but it refuses to give up the right to veto the creation of groups seeking closer integration.

Prime Minister denies seeking EMU 'dodge'

By Jill Sherman, Chief Political Correspondent

JOHN MAJOR insisted yesterday that he was not looking for some "clever dodge" to change the Government's wait-and-see policy on joining a single currency.

The Prime Minister said he would not budge from the Cabinet policy of keeping open Britain's options on joining the first wave of economic monetary union. But he made clear

that if other European Union countries wanted to judge the economic criteria for proceeding with a single currency, Britain would advise them not to go ahead, and would certainly not join them if they did.

That would be damaging for Europe as a whole if the scheme went ahead on that basis, Mr Major said at his press conference.

The Prime Minister is still under pressure from several Cabinet ministers to take a tougher line on EMU and

to rule out Britain's entry in a first wave before the general election. But yesterday he signalled that Britain would be unable to judge the economic criteria until the end of this year or the beginning of next, a line recently pushed by Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr Major said that the Cabinet was exploring the best basis on which to judge whether economic criteria were being fudged and that a report would be produced by the Treasury within

four weeks. Some of his colleagues are hoping that he will be able to use the report to rule out a single currency at the eleventh hour, if there is evidence that this could make a crucial difference to the election result.

He hoped for progress on EU matters at last night's talks with Wim Kok, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, which holds the EU presidency. However, Mr Major said he would reiterate a number of points that Britain could not accept.

BANK OF SCOTLAND INTEREST RATE CHANGE

With effect from 8th January 1997, interest rates payable on the undernoted accounts have changed.

MONEY MARKET CHEQUE ACCOUNT	Gross %
£250,000 and above	5.50
£100,000 to £249,999	4.50
£25,000 to £99,999	4.25
£2,500 to £24,999	3.50

BANKING DIRECT INVESTMENT ACCOUNT	Gross %
£250,000 and above	5.75
£25,000 to £249,999	5.25
£10,000 to £24,999	4.50
£5,000 to £9,999	3.75
Less than £5,000	3.25

MONEY MARKET BUSINESS CHEQUE ACCOUNT	Gross %
£250,000 and above	5.50
£100,000 to £249,999	4.50
£25,000 to £99,999	3.50
£5,000 to £24,999	3.00

BANKING DIRECT INSTANT ACCESS SAVINGS ACCOUNT	Gross %
£10,000 and above	5.60
£5,000 to £9,999	5.13
£500 to £4,999	4.65

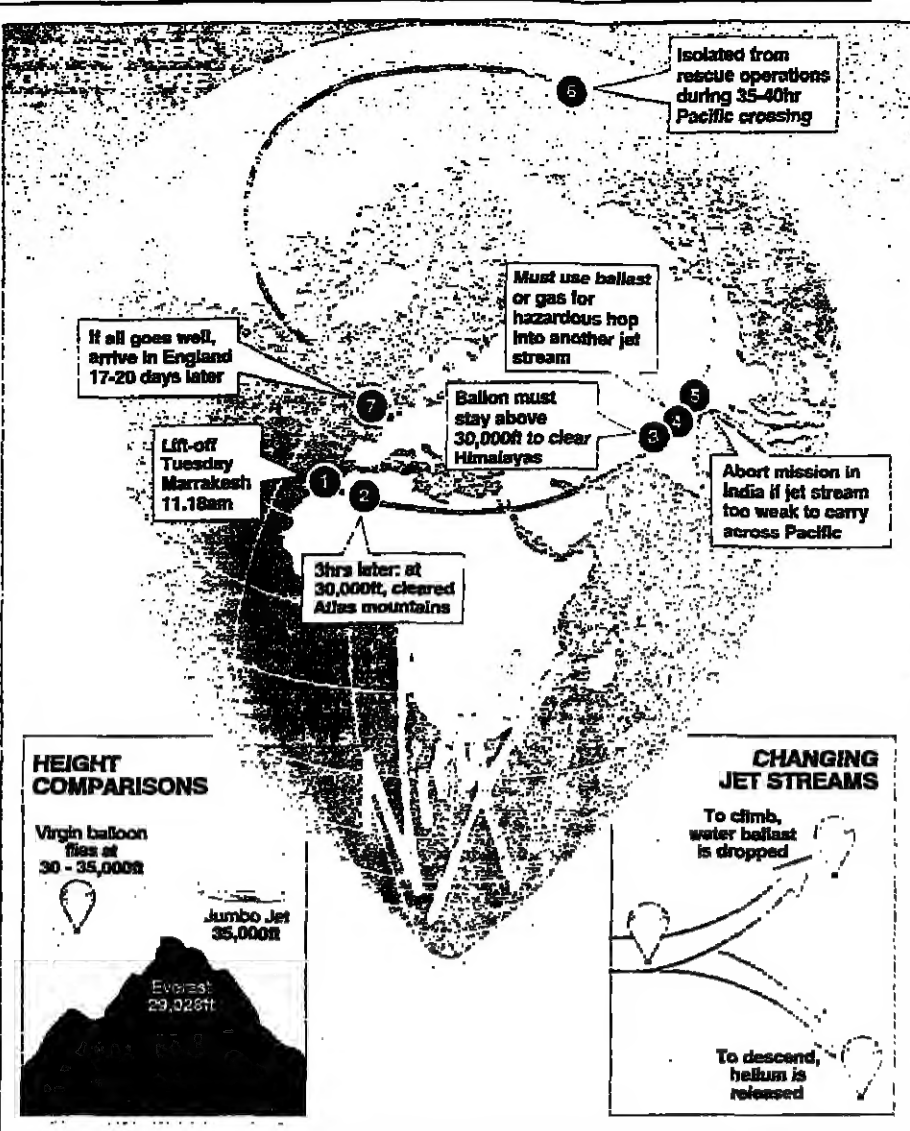
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This trip is like juggling soot underwater, blindfold. Not knowing where you'll land is the romance



Richard Branson bidding farewell to his wife Joan, son Sam and daughter Holly. "Love you, see you in a few weeks," was his message to his wife. Wiping away tears he told his daughter: "Good luck at school this term"



Branson clears first hurdle heading into 250mph winds

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

FROM the moment that *Global Challenger* left the ground at 11.15am yesterday, it was being precisely monitored thousands of miles away by communication and aviation experts in a hotel room in west London.

For them, the balloon's rise signalled the start of up to three weeks of constant tracking and liaison with the three-man crew. Up to a dozen people will work round the clock in the three-room command centre on the ninth floor of the Royal Garden Hotel in Kensington.



Rory McCarthy with Richard Branson after he learnt he would not make the trip; Alex Ritchie, who is replacing him; and his wife Jill, who could not believe the news



"He sounded excited but was obviously trying to suppress it. I had very mixed feelings. I was so shocked at first as it was so unexpected. Then I thought of the poor chap who has had to drop out. And of course you cannot avoid a

certain amount of worry." It was not until her son Alastair, 23, telephoned her late yesterday morning to say he had seen the balloon take off on television that the full impact of her husband's journey hit her. "I was relieved to hear it

had taken off, as I felt the first hurdle has been safely cleared, but then I thought, 'Good gracious, he's up there.' The balloon will cross 70 countries. Last year, when the voyage was called off because of poor weather, the Virgin

team had failed to secure permission to cross the airspace of Libya and China. This time approval has been granted for all countries. After takeoff the *Challenger* entered jetstreams at 30,000ft where winds of up to 250mph

will carry it from west to east, without the crew feeling they are moving. There is a fear that when it crosses Canada it could be sucked into the Arctic. As the balloon gained its flying height of between 30,000-35,000ft, its first tricky

manoeuvre was over the Atlas mountains. Having cleared them, the crew's aim was to force their way into a jetstream to carry them east. Ninety minutes after *Challenger* took off a Cessna Citation jet, which will track

the balloon with a six-man technical and television crew, took off from Marrakesh.

In the London control room, a modem flashes the latitude and longitude of the balloon to within three metres every 30 seconds, via a global positioning satellite.

Yet despite the technology, the fundamental unpredictability of the exercise lends an edginess to the command centre. "You can plan the route to a certain extent, but really, this balloon trip is like juggling soot underwater, blindfold," Mark Lockwood, the project co-ordinator, said. "But that's the romance of ballooning. Who knows where it will end up?"

High adventure, page 15
Leading article, and
Letters, page 17

Mock hangings for jail hostages

By AUDREY MAGRE, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

PRISON officers were subjected to mock hangings as they were held hostage by prisoners during a three-day siege at Mountjoy jail in Dublin.

The crisis ended peacefully late on Monday, but the four officers were being treated for trauma yesterday. John Loneragan, the prison governor, said the men had suffered greatly at the hands of the six inmates involved.

The prisoners, who include Paul Ward, charged with conspiring to murder the Irish journalist Veronica Guerin, devised numerous ways of threatening the officers over a 50-hour period. On Monday they forced two officers to stand on a table and put nooses around their necks. They counted down to a hanging and said they would kill the men unless their demands were met.

The prisoners were armed with metal chair legs and a blood-filled syringe, a clear threat in a prison where AIDS and drug abuse are rife. According to prison sources, all six prisoners are intravenous drug users and at least two are believed to be HIV-positive. They requested, and were given, a legally prescribed heroin substitute during the hostage crisis.

Tom Hoare, spokesman of

the Prison Officers' Association, said the six prisoners were very volatile and dangerous individuals. They were housed in a separation unit within the prison because they argued with other prisoners and attacked prison officers. Five were serving sentences for violent crimes, including manslaughter, kidnapping and assault.

Mr Loneragan said police and the army came close on a number of occasions to storming the recreation room where the officers were being held. He said the prison negotiating team, who were trained in Edinburgh, managed to divert the crisis.

The prisoners made numerous demands. Mr Ward was protesting his innocence while the others demanded better conditions and transfers to other prisons. On Monday the prisoners threatened to kill the officers when the prison authorities refused to hand them a newspaper article outlining the methods used to storm the building.

Nora Owen, the Irish Justice Minister, said her department would conduct a full review of security at the prison. She said the six prisoners involved in the hostage taking would face "the full rigours of the law".

Hank Marvin's son found dead

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE estranged son of the Shadows' guitarist Hank Marvin has been found dead in his room at a YMCA hostel in north London where he lived the life of a recluse for five years.

Acquaintances of Dean Marvin, 35, the godson of Sir Cliff Richard, claimed he had died of a drug overdose in the 15-a-week room where he was found on Monday, although the cause of death will not be known until a post-mortem examination is held today. He was a solitary man in poor health who was always reluctant to speak about



Hank Marvin: shocked and saddened by death

the early 1960s when his father commanded the heights of public adulation.

Hank Marvin, 55, who divorced Dean's mother, Billie, and remarried 27 years ago before emigrating to Australia in the Eighties, was said by his British representative Brian Goode to be "very shocked and very saddened".

Mr Goode did not know when Hank Marvin, who is due to begin a lengthy concert tour of Britain in March with his son by his second marriage, last saw Dean or whether he would attend his funeral. Sir Cliff, who was rehearsing in Manchester for the opening of his musical *Heathcliff*, said: "It doesn't matter who the victim is - it's a sad indictment of society when people die in this way."

"It's all the more painful of course when the person is known to you and, although I haven't seen Dean since Hank's family split in the late Sixties, my sympathy goes out to his mum and dad who, I know, must be devastated."

Ben Badojo, manager of the hostel in Hornsey, said: "Dean was generally OK with everyone and seemed pleasant enough. He wasn't a bad person. I never saw his family visit or heard him talking about them."

Harrods customer 'did not notice £120,000 spent by card fraudsters'

By A STAFF REPORTER

A WEALTHY Harrods customer never noticed that criminals spent £120,000 on his credit card account in three months, a court was told yesterday.

Al Shazif Al Hussein appeared to have "an almost limitless credit card limit", Michael Holland, for the prosecution, told Harrow Crown Court. "It was a goldmine for the fraudsters," he said.

Police investigating the fraud found numerous illegal transactions had been rung up on his account. Visits to menswear stores, restaurants, supermarkets and Harrods were listed.

Mr Al Hussein was not the only person to be left out of pocket, the court was told.

Sixty-nine other customers of the Harrods leather goods department lost £85,000.

Elizabeth John, 31, a Harrods manageress from Hendon, north London, denies one charge of conspiracy to defraud. Mr Holland said Miss John's brother Koshi, 29, had admitted the charge.

He said that Miss John took home 1,500 receipts containing customers' credit card details, which were examined to identify high-limit accounts. Others in the ring encoded the information on to bogus cards and illegal transactions were carried out not only through innocent retailers but "collusive" traders - mainly in the West Midlands - were brought in on the scheme, he said.

Mr Holland said the fraudsters were

not always successful - failed transactions totalled more than £75,000. He told the jury the first hint of the fraud came in November 1993 when police, trailing a man in Birmingham in connection with another matter, saw him dump something in a waste bin. Closer examination revealed a number of Harrods receipts and counterfeit credit cards.

Similar material was found in another litter bin four months later. It was not until January 1995 that police caught up with Koshi John, and through him his sister, the jury was told.

When her home was searched the receipts and other documents were found, which she allegedly had no right to take. The trial continues.

The Eurostar January Sale.

31 December - 13 January

Midweek Travel

(Tuesday-Thursday, including Saturday away)

Brussels	was £59	now £49
Lille	was £57	now £49
Calais	was £57	now £39

Midweek Day Trips

(Monday-Thursday, booking 14 days in advance)

Paris	was £69	now £59
Brussels	was £59	now £49
Lille	was £49	now £39
Calais	was £49	now £29

Fares apply to tickets purchased 31 December to 13 January incl. Travel must be taken by 26th March. Subject to terms and availability.



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or see an appointed travel agent or railway station.

Labour leader's 'heartless' criticism of begging earns sympathy vote for the homeless

Blair is a nice little earner for vagrants of King's Cross

By DANIEL MCGRORY

TONY BLAIR may never put his hand in his pocket for them but the homeless of King's Cross had ample reason to be grateful to the Labour leader yesterday.

Regulars who work the station for handouts, such as John Lee, 54, were appalled that Mr Blair wants them to be cleared from the streets but were paid handsomely yesterday for the television crews that descended on King's Cross.

"We don't scare people, we just sit here looking cold and people chuck us a few coins," Mr Lee said. "We rarely get insulted and the worst we face is being moved on by the police, but we all know each other so there is never any trouble."

Counting the morning's takings, Mr Lee took a forlorn draught from his can of lager and declared that Mr Blair had been good for business yesterday.

Most commuters who stopped to throw some money in Mr Lee's woolen hat evidently had more sympathy for

him than the Labour leader. Michael Hardman, an accounts manager from Bushey, Hertfordshire, said: "These people don't intimidate you and sitting out in this cold is hard work to me. Tony Blair's remarks came across as cheap and heartless."

Mr Blair said in an interview with *The Big Issue*, a magazine distributed by the homeless, that he often dropped his children off to take a Tube at King's Cross, and that "it's a frightening place for people". But Prem Vohra, duty customer operations manager at the station, said: "This is one of the friendliest and safest places in London. He must get easily scared."

Adrian Templeton, 41, who sells *The Big Issue* at King's Cross, adopted a new sales technique yesterday, shouting to a commuter: "Excuse me, madam, I am begging but I'm still doing a more honest job than Tony Blair."

As she bought her copy, containing Mr Blair's comments, Nicola Morris, 26, said: "He is talking rubbish

and should be ashamed of himself. He has lost my vote."

Senior police were concerned that Mr Blair's remarks might have damaged their efforts to erase the King's Cross reputation for drug addicts, prostitutes and beggars. Since Operation Welwyn, a New York-style zero-tolerance endeavour, began in 1992, crime in the area has dropped by more than 50 per cent.

Superintendent Geoff Holmes, of British Transport Police, said: "We have worked with local charities and the council to help alcoholics and addicts to get treatment and find places for vagrants to stay, and we are proud of what we have achieved."

"We used to have occasional purges and the prostitutes just moved to Paddington, the beggars went three miles north to Camden and the addicts to Islington. Now the operation is co-ordinated so we get them off the street for a while at least."

Pausing to give a brief television interview for E10, Louise Gilbert, 17, and Laura Foley, 16, evaded the police and scurried down to the Underground ticket machines, where they know travellers are likely to have a handful of change. Wrapped in a pink duvet to ward off the cold, Miss Foley said that in the week before Christmas she had earned £90 a day "because people felt a bit guilty". But usually the teenagers aimed for £20 to be spent on cigarettes, a hot drink and food, and then moved to another Tube station before police could catch them.

They said that they had been thrown out of their homes and had been arrested for vagrancy, but they intend to ignore Mr Blair and carry on begging. So does Mr Lee: "At my age, and with 29 years spent in prison for various offences, what else am I going to do?"

Leading article, page 17



"We don't scare people, we just sit here looking cold," said John Lee, right, with a friend in King's Cross yesterday

Tea and sympathy substituted for hard cash, but not all are givers

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY
CAROL MIDGLEY
AND ROBIN YOUNG

THE disclosure by Tony Blair that he refuses to give money to beggars sparked a heated debate yesterday over how to react when accosted by the homeless. Anyone courageous enough to tackle John Prescott, Mr Blair's deputy, in King's Cross may feel warmer, but no wealthier after the meeting.

The pugnacious Mr Prescott, challenged on his own response, hesitated before divulging: "What I do sometimes is I offer them a cup of tea when I'm up at King's Cross. But they don't always want it." We may never know whether Mr Prescott gives them the tea regardless.

Most generous of all the senior politicians, according to his own reckoning, is John Major, although few of the homeless will hear the jingle of his money. "Yes, I give a great deal of money to beggars," said the Prime Minister



Joan Bakewell's view was changed by experience and she now gives money, as does Auberon Waugh

in preparation to a well-rehearsed response. "Millions of pounds of your money. The Government has given a lot of money to beggars to make sure that those inadequately sheltered

are better off. I don't think I can do more. You never give them

more than £1 — perhaps a little more if they have dog, nothing if there are children — but I particularly dislike 50p pieces so they are what I dispense most readily."

Brian Sewell, the art critic, was more generous. "I carry in my pocket what I call the beggar's note, which is a five," he said. "I come across people begging frequently, and it disturbs me."

Malcolm Bradbury, the au-

thor, said: "We give money, but to our own charities. It is dedicated giving. Like everyone else I am desperately concerned by the spectacle of homelessness. It is a complex problem, part of which is the Mental Health Act. I think Tony Blair's words were meant compassionately."

Joan Bakewell, the television presenter, said: "I didn't give to beggars because I didn't think it solved their problems. But then I did a programme for *Heart of the Matter* in which I had to sit on pavements and in doorways with the homeless and it completely changed my attitude."

"Beggars do want money, but what they really wanted was contact with people. Even if you just say 'How are you?' it is better than nothing."

Clare Rayner, the agony aunt, said: "I do give money to beggars because it seems to me that if someone is that far down that he is prepared to beg then that is the least I can do for him."

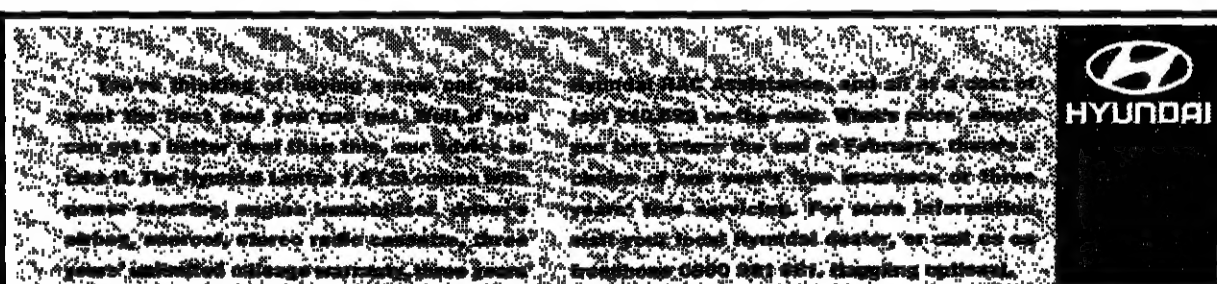
MAJOR v BLAIR

Tory officials yesterday accused Tony Blair of hypocrisy after the Prime Minister claimed to have backed so-called zero tolerance policies two years ago and been criticised for it. Mr Major said: "It will be interesting to see what they have to say today since Mr Blair has now said, two years after me, precisely the same thing."

Mr Major, in May 1994 in an interview with the *Bristol Evening Post* during the Eastleigh by-election campaign, said: "It is not acceptable to be out on the street. There is no justification for it. The problem about begging is as old as the hills. It is very offensive to many people."

Mr Blair, then Shadow Home Secretary, said in response: "The real criticism of what the Prime Minister has done [in attacking beggars] is not only its vindictiveness against some who will be genuinely destitute, it is the notion that this is what we should be concentrating on. It is the pettiness and small-mindedness of it which will affront people and bewilder them when there are such massive problems to tackle, and when the Prime Minister appears to be oblivious to them."

However, Mr Blair also said that aggressive beggars who "push people against the wall and demand money effectively with menaces" should be dealt with firmly.



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Doctors 'wrong about measles'

By DOMINIC KENNEDY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

MEASLES is being wrongly diagnosed by general practitioners in 97 per cent of cases. The discovery, based on a study of 12,000 patients, means that the potentially fatal disease has been almost eradicated in Britain.

The finding also leaves doctors wondering which other, possibly more serious, rashes have been afflicting the population without being recognised. The widespread misdiagnosis raises a question mark over the costly new immunisation campaign to give a booster jab to all pre-school children, which was introduced last October.

Until two years ago, the only way a doctor could be certain that a patient had measles was to perform a blood test. Since most sufferers were children, GPs were reluctant to stick a needle in their arms to confirm an illness with relatively minor consequences in early years.

Measles is more serious for teenagers and adults, especially those with weak immune

systems. It kills a million people a year in the developing world, especially malnourished children.

A simple saliva test has been developed and since 1994 has been sent to all doctors who diagnosed measles, which is a notifiable disease. Analysis has shown that fewer than 3 per cent of the patients had measles.

Roger Buttery, who is carrying out a new study to discover what the rashes really are, said: "Any doctor or nurse would reckon to spot measles at 100 yards. We were, to put it crudely, gobsmacked to think that a disease so obvious as measles in 97 per cent of cases actually isn't measles."

The other likely candidates could be more serious, said Dr Buttery, consultant in communicable diseases for the Cambridge and Huntingdon Health Commission. Parvovirus can cause problems in early pregnancy, German measles is linked to birth defects, and Roseola may give a child a convulsion.

Newsprint recycling beats target

By NICK NUTTALL
ENVIRONMENT
CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH newspapers are leading the world in the reuse of newsprint. More than 40 per cent of titles are produced from recycled paper, a meeting of national and regional publishers and newsprint makers was told yesterday.

While John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, hailed the industry's green achievements, *Friends of the Earth* accused it of failing to strive for recycling targets of up to 80 per cent and of not using enough wood from sustainably managed forests.

Sir Frank Rogers, chairman of the Newspaper Publishers' Association, said it was impractical to have more waste paper in newspapers at the moment. "The plain fact is that the capacity of the recycling plant in the UK currently would not allow this to be met."

Mr Gummer pointed out that the 40 per cent target had been achieved four years earlier than the 2000 deadline.

Mackay to face MPs' Freemason inquiry

The Lord Chancellor is to be questioned by MPs about Freemasonry in the judiciary amid mounting pressure for judges and police officers to declare their Masonic membership. Lord Mackay of Clashfern will appear before the Commons Home Affairs Committee as part of its inquiry into Freemasonry. Judges are facing calls to resign as Freemasons or, at least, publicly state their membership when they take up a judicial appointment. The *Masonic Year Book* includes more than 30 judges.

Oasis caution

Liam Gallagher, of the pop group Oasis, escaped with a police caution yesterday for possession of cocaine. Gallagher, 24, had been arrested on November 9 in the West End of London and given police bail. The decision was condemned by MPs.

Snap solution

Bus lane cheats will be caught on camera for the first time in a scheme to be launched in March. The project is to be piloted in north London with cameras being mounted on buses and at the roadside. The Home Office is expected to give approval next month.

Player cleared

Steve McCurrie, 23, a Great Britain rugby league international, was acquitted at Warrington Crown Court yesterday of inflicting grievous bodily harm on a three-month-old girl. It was alleged he shook the child.

Drugs sentence

Frederick Whelan, 65, who smuggled cannabis worth £140 into Gartree Prison, Leicestershire, to his stepson who is serving a life sentence for the murder of paedophile Carl Bridgewater, was jailed for a year.

Asylum fall

The number of asylum-seekers has fallen dramatically since the Government restricted social security benefits available to them. There were 25,000 applications last year up to November, compared with 40,435 the year before.

Drink-drive fine

Sergeant Pamela De Neve, 32, a police training instructor, faces dismissal after being fined £1,800 by Ipswich Magistrates and disqualified for two years after driving into a parked car while almost three times the legal alcohol limit.

Curzon freed

Peter Curzon, 47, heir to Viscount Scarsdale, was released from custody in Charing Cross police station in London yesterday after a divorce settlement of several hundred thousand pounds was paid to his former wife.

Gas blast victims

Marie Breen and her sons Colin, 7, and Iwan, 5, are in hospital after they were trapped in rubble when a gas explosion wrecked their home. Neighbours and firefighters from New Tredegar, Gwent, South Wales, rescued them.

Transsexual loses

A 6ft blonde transsexual who was refused a job as a woman police officer after undergoing a sex-change operation lost a claim yesterday at a Birmingham tribunal for sex discrimination against West Midlands Police.

Liam makes the top ten ... for names

By IAN MURRAY

LIAM has for the first time entered the list of top ten names chosen for sons. Not put off by the bad boy image of the Oasis rock star Liam Gallagher, enough parents preferred it to make it No 10 in the table of first names published today by the Office for National Statistics.

Jack and Sophie were the most popular first names for boys and girls born in England and Wales last year, with Jack winning the title for the second year running. The list also shows that such Victorian favourites as Joshua are outlasting the Darwins and Jansons which were popular not so long ago. Celtic names like Ryan and Shannon are becoming more common than John or Henry.

Royal names are less popular, with Charles way down at 45 and Diana not even making it into the top 50 for girls. In

BOYS

1 Jack, 2 Daniel, 3 Thomas, 4 James, 5 Joshua, 6 Matthew, 7 Ryan, 8 Samuel, 9 Joseph, 10 Liam, 11 Luke, 12 Jordan, 13 Connor, 14 Alexander, 15 Benjamin, 16 Adam, 17 Jake, 18 Harry, 19 William, 20 Michael, 21 George, 22 Callum, 23 Oliver, 24 Lewis, 25 Christopher, 26 Kieran, 27 Robert, 28 Andrew, 29 Jamie, 30 Nathan, 31 David, 32 Bradley, 33 Aaron, 34 Ben, 35 Jacob, 36 Mohammed, 37 Kyle, 38 Charlie, 39 Jonathan, 40 Ashley, 41 John, 42 Cameron, 43 Alex, 44 Rocco, 45 Charles, 46 Edward, 47 Scott, 48 Sean, 49 Sam, 50 Dominic

GIRLS

1 Sophie, 2 Jessica, 3 Chloe, 4 Emily, 5 Lauren, 6 Rebecca, 7 Charlotte, 8 Hannah, 9 Amy, 10 Megan, 11 Shannon, 12 Katie, 13 Emma, 14 Sinead, 15 Lucy, 16 Laura, 17 Georgia, 18 Sarah, 19 Jade, 20 Abigail, 21 Danielle, 22 Eleanor, 23 Olivia, 24 Alice, 25 Elizabeth, 26 Rachel, 27 Paige, 28 Molly, 29 Holly, 30 Zoe, 31 Samantha, 32 Ellie, 33 Chloë, 34 Nicole, 35 Natasha, 36 Leah, 37 Victoria, 38 Alexandra, 39 Georgina, 40 Grace, 41 Amber, 42 Jodie, 43 Natalie, 44 Abbie, 45 Anna, 46 Katherine, 47 Louise, 48 Stephanie, 49 Melissa, 50 Gemma

boys' names, Harry and William take eighteenth and fifteenth places, Andrew is twenty-eighth and Edward forty-sixth. Elizabeth is twenty-fifth among the girls.

Today's more informal society also means that familiar forms of names are becoming

more popular. Jack is preferred to John (41) or James (4), Charlie (38) scores better than Charles (45) and Katie (12) is above Katherine (46).

The fastest-rising name in this year's list is Leah, up 20 places to 36, possibly a reflection of the way in which the

Esty death of the teenager Leah Betts at the end of 1995 touched hearts across the nation. The influence of television advertising is evident from the way Molly, the name of a toddler starring in a Sainsbury's supermarket commercial, soared 19 places in the girls' chart to 36.

The list shows that parents are far more conservative in choosing names for boys than they are for girls. James is the only one to have appeared in the top ten since the first-name records began in 1944.

This year's top seven boys' names — Jack, Daniel, Thomas, James, Joshua, Matthew and Ryan — are unchanged from 1995, with Samuel moving up and Joseph and Liam replacing Luke and Jordan in the top ten.

The girls' top ten sees Sophie, Chloe (up six at No 3), Emily (up four at No 4), and Megan (up four at No 10), gaining in popularity.



Humphrey Lyttelton, singer Cleo Laine and her husband John Dankworth at the crematorium yesterday. Scott "was modest to a fault, but his club put London on the jazz map of the world", Lyttelton said

Blues for Ronnie Scott transformed into swinging celebration

BY ALAN HAMILTON

THE turnout at the funeral of Ronnie Scott yesterday would have done justice to a Saturday night at the Soho club which he founded and which put London on the jazz map of the world.

Musicians, admirers, friends, lovers and daughters of the permanent bachelor packed Golders Green crematorium, north London, to bid farewell to the best known name in British jazz. So many mourners attended that more than 100 were left outside. Tributes came from beyond mainstream jazz: they included flowers from the rock musicians Van Morrison and Keith Emerson.

Scott was Jewish, but his true religion lay elsewhere, in the sinful and smoky world of after-dark clubland. His funeral service was dignified but relaxed, with no prayer books or orders of service. Only a tape of his sweet tenor sax playing softly in the background as his coffin was carried in. Rabbi Guy Hall told the congregation that Scott's club was as dark as a medieval cathedral, its walls covered with the icons of jazz saints — but that the water it served was far from holy. The Talmud, Rabbi Hall said, spoke of those who made music in the present world also doing so in the next. He speculated that on Scott's arrival in Heaven, angels hung up their halos to jam with Gabriel and his tenor horn in a dark backroom. "Jazz is prayer: its songs speak of suffering or falling in and out of love."

Benny Green, the jazz writer, broadcaster and friend of Scott for 45 years, shared with the congregation the reminiscence that 69-year-old Scott had, in his early years, expressed the wish to be cremated, provided that his ashes were scattered over his agent, Harold Davidson. The veteran band leader Humphrey Lyttelton said after the service: "I rarely played at his club, as the first set was always after my bedtime. But he was, in his own mind, first and foremost a tenor sax player. He was modest to a fault, but his club put London on the jazz map of the world, a fantastic achievement for a modest man."

A frail Spike Milligan recalled that Scott had suffered, like himself, from manic depression. "He rang me the week before he died, and I asked him what pills he was on. He said Tuinal and whisky. I said that was no good, and he'd better come and stay with me. But then he was dead."

At the end of the service the congregation, led by Scott's former partner Mary Scott and their daughter Rebecca, trooped out to a tape of Stan Getz and Jimmy Rowles playing, appropriately, *What Am I Here For?* in the biting wind of Golders Green, there was only one place for the mourners to go for a decent wake. They piled into limousines, cars and taxis and headed straight for Ronnie Scott's club.

Firm's former boss 'ended up making the tea'

BY PAUL WILKINSON

A BUSINESSWOMAN, who said her security company to a rival ended up being demoted to saleswoman and being told to make the tea for a job applicant, an industrial tribunal was told yesterday. Doris Jones, who is claiming sexual discrimination, said she also earned less than men in more junior posts.

Mrs Jones, a Conservative councillor from Darlington, Co Durham, set up Sale and Sure in 1985 and sold it to Ambassador Security Group in 1990, remaining as branch manager, but clashed almost immediately with Les Robinson, the regional sales manager. She said he told her to take her name off a job advertisement because men would not want to apply to a woman. He had also suggested she take redundancy because she was a woman over 50.

At one point she had complained that her branch did not have an engineering manager and suggested interviewing a man called Jim Sadler.

Les Robinson sat in on the interview and told me to get some coffee. In my absence Jim Sadler was offered a salary of £17,025 per year. This was despite the fact that, as his superior, I would have been earning considerably less. I only became aware because the offer letter was sent to me inadvertently.

Mrs Jones told the tribunal at Newcastle upon Tyne that she was paid £15,500 as branch manager, but men in the same position in Hull and Leeds were paid £16,500 and the Manchester branch manager received £21,500. In April 1995, the Darlington and Hull offices had merged and she was offered demotion to the post of sales manager, with a 3 per cent salary increase, or redundancy.

"Mr Robinson made it clear he wanted me to take redundancy. He told me, 'As you are a woman past the age of 50, and women being what they are, I would have thought you would have wanted to stay at home and accept the redundancy package.'"

It had then been agreed she should have the job originally offered to her. But later that year, Mr Robinson had told her that the Darlington branch was being transferred to Gateshead and administration work would be done at Hull. Her position as sales manager was changed to sales executive after all.

She said: "I was shell-shocked to be demoted twice in 12 months while my male colleagues had been cushioned. I could not escape the conclusion that I was being pushed out because I was a woman."

The hearing continues.



Jones was demoted after she sold out

Millionaire pays for starring role

BY DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A JAPANESE millionaire who takes private music lessons is to star as a singer and conductor in a concert he has organised and funded at one of London's foremost venues.

Toshio Fukami, who has no intention of giving up his day job as a management consultant, has paid £50,000 to take centre stage at St John's, Smith Square. He will be singing arias from Handel's *Xerxes* and Verdi's *Macbeth* and conducting Elgar's *Land of Hope and Glory*. He will conduct the English Chamber Orchestra.

Mr Fukami, 45, whose business interests include travel agencies, publishing companies and hostels in Japan, Britain and Australia, sees concerts as "a way to challenge yourself but also to have humility". He said: "I'm the president of 15 companies, so people obey me when I tell them what to do. But in the arts there will always be superiors to me, so I listen to them. It makes me more open-minded to my employees and that helps to run my business."

He has had private tuition in singing and conducting in Japan and America and a friend introduced him to the chamber orchestra. He also composes classical, pop and jazz music. His artistic activities are not just for art's sake: through a foundation which he set up last year, he raises money for charities.

He paid £300,000 to appear at New York's Carnegie Hall last November. Tonight's concert will help children with leukaemia.

Shunro Sato, the orchestra's associate conductor, said: "He's a gentleman with a lot of enthusiasms and interests. That amazed me." Asked about a professional orchestra working with an amateur, he added: "It's not usually a good idea. But it's a good change for the ECO or a professional orchestra. It's good to bring different kinds of enthusiasms. Amateurs don't have to worry about money and can take some kind of risk. Fukami has got a real talent."

Mr Fukami said: "The arts are always recreating — that's what fascinates me. Whenever I perform I have to come up with new things to make audiences happy. I strive never to repeat a performance."

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Forgotten footage yields more Bogie and Bacall magic

By DAIMA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

EIGHTEEN minutes of previously unseen film starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, which the director Howard Hawks cut from his 1946 classic *The Big Sleep*, have been discovered in archives.

Adrian Wootton, head of the National Film Theatre, which will screen the early print for the first time at the weekend, called it an "incredible discovery of one of the most famous films ever made."

Hawks, who gave Bacall her big break in 1945 with *To Have and Have Not*, is known to have removed the 18 minutes to allow for extra scenes to heighten the Bogart-Bacall romance. No one had realised that the original version of *The Big Sleep*, made a year before the final reworking was released, had survived.

It had been languishing in the Warner Bros archives, at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), and was discovered by chance when



Hawks: he preferred to use the earlier scenes

their best-known roles: Philip Marlowe and Vivian Rutledge. Mr Wootton said that the most notable "new" material featured Bogart and three police detectives discussing the plot so far. "It's a confusing plot. Hawks tries to get round it by shooting that scene. But he decided that, although it made the plot more coherent, he wanted to make the Bogart-Bacall rapport sexier."

Another previously unknown scene showed the couple meeting in a "boring-looking office, with Bacall in an ordinary daytime dress and Bogart in an ordinary suit," Mr Wootton said.

Hawks added glamour for the 1946 version by reshooting the scene in a nightclub, with Bacall wearing a slinky dress. The dialogue was made sexier, "with double-entendres thrown in."

The film was the most radical of Hawks's reworkings and gives new insight into his approach. Mr



The 1946 classic *The Big Sleep*: "the audience wanted to see Bogart and Bacall puckering up to each other"

Wootton said: "The original film makes you understand who killed who a little better than the 1946 version. You get baffled two thirds of the way through about who's blackmailing who, and for what. With this, you get a recap that makes you hold on to who's doing what to who. But you

lose the romantic tension. In the end, the audience wanted to see Bogart and Bacall puckering up to each other." Chandler once said that even he did not know "who done it".

Apart from a preview to which Hawks decided to treat American troops in 1945, the rediscovered print has not

been shown to the public. The military audience is said not to have enjoyed it particularly; the re-edited film went on to become a huge success.

Warner's archives includes prints of most of its major titles, as well as rushes and alternative versions of films which were changed before

being released. The 1945 version of *The Big Sleep*, whose restoration was funded by UCLA and the British Film Institute, will be screened on Saturday and Sunday, while the 1946 movie will be shown next month.

Hot tickets, page 33

Television record for Del Boy and Rodney

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

A CHRISTMAS edition of the sitcom *Only Fools and Horses* attracted the biggest British television audience, according to official figures published yesterday.

The last episode of the three-part farewell edition of the show, screened on December 29, was watched by 24.35 million viewers. Episodes one and two, which were broadcast on Christmas Day and December 27, attracted audiences of 21.31 million and 21.35 million respectively.

Fans of the show, starring David Jason and Nicholas Lyndhurst, will be hoping the figures will encourage the BBC to make more episodes. The corporation had said that the Christmas special would be the last.

The average viewer spent 5 hours 11 minutes watching television on Christmas Day and 32 hours 35 minutes during Christmas week. The average viewing is 25 hours 9 minutes a week.

The baby who made history 36 years ago

By JOHN YOUNG

ALMOST 36 years ago Paul Carvin made history as the youngest "blue baby" to survive open heart surgery for a defect known as Fallot's tetralogy. Although he now has multiple sclerosis, he has led a normal, active life and is still keen to busy himself during periods of remission.

Mr Carvin was nine months old when he had the operation at the Evelina children's hospital, the paediatric department of Guy's Hospital, then in its original building in Southwark Bridge Road, London. A generation later, heart operations are regularly performed on much younger children, and even on fetuses, but at the time it was a big breakthrough.

A subsequent report in *The Lancet* recorded that, at 18 months, he was thriving, weighed 20lb, could run without breathlessness and that cyanosis, the lack of oxygen in the blood which causes the blue discoloration, had disappeared.

Mr Carvin had what he describes as a fairly normal childhood. There were periodic visits to the Evelina for check-ups, but on each occasion he was given a clean bill of health.

"But my parents were over-protective," he said. "My father, who worked for the BBC, had been a prisoner of war in Japan, and that may have had something to do with it. But it was probably understandable at the time."

"The school didn't want to take responsibility in case

anything happened to me, so I was not allowed to play games. At football matches I was allowed to be a linesman, but that was it. It's still one of my great regrets."

Proof that his heart was fully recovered came when he left school and, after a brief and unsatisfying spell in a solicitor's office, took a job in a pub just before his eighteenth birthday. Working in the cellar and behind the bar involved long hours and strenuous activity, but he thrived on it. "I never had a day's sickness."

His wife, Elizabeth, persuaded him to look for less hazardous employment and he became head porter at a London hospice, after which they worked as residential careworkers for six years at John Bunyan's church in Bedford. Since developing MS he has been unable to work regularly, but he has had periodic sedentary jobs, including monitoring closed-circuit television cameras.

Mr Carvin's problems have not been eased by his elder daughter's profound deafness. However, he remains philosophical and even cheerful, frustrated only by boredom at being "no longer as active as he was."

"I have my bad days," he said. "I seem to catch every bug that's going and they really knock me out. But I am eternally grateful to Michael Joseph, the cardiologist, and Donald Ross, the surgeon, who gave me life and allowed me to live it to the full."



Paul Carvin, a former "blue baby", with his wife Elizabeth, and daughters Sophie, 10, left, and Amy, 9

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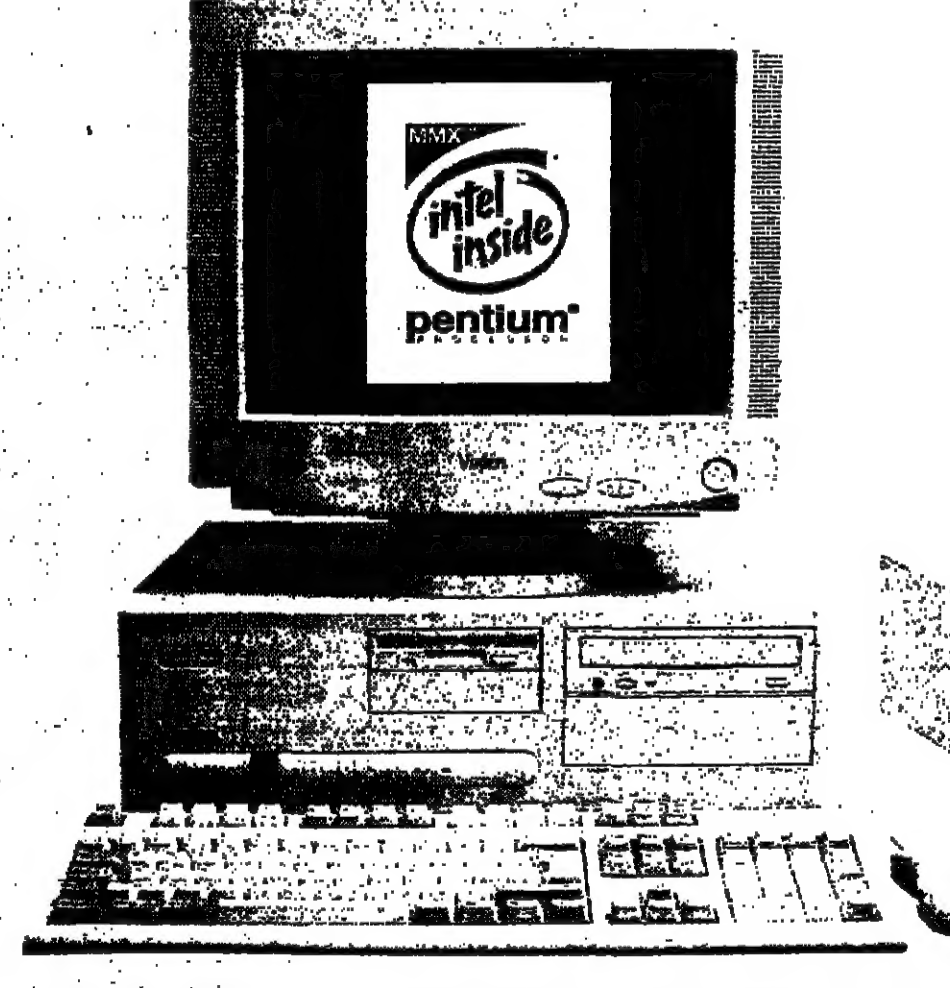
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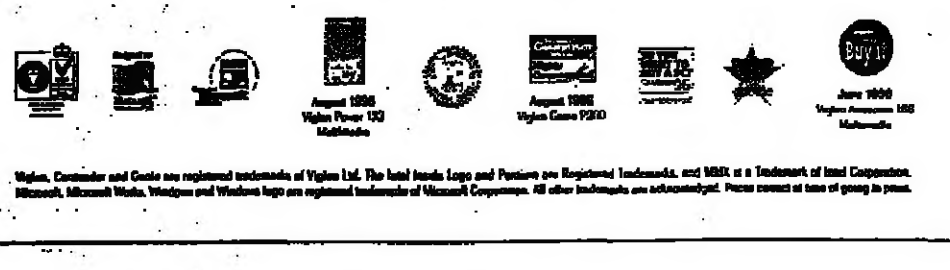
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WEDNESDAY JANUARY 8 1997

Egypt bans Irish beef after BSE risk

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Unrepentant soldier re-enacts shooting amid dispute over further withdrawals

New demand by Israel holds up deal on Hebron

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

AS THE United States stepped up its efforts yesterday to secure the so far elusive deal on the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Hebron, there was a bizarre reminder of the dangers threatening the West Bank.

Under the eerie glow of floodlights, Noam Friedman, the 22-year-old Israeli soldier who tried to kill "as many Arabs as possible" in the city last week, returned to the marketplace to re-enact his actions for police investigators. His attempted massacre left six Palestinians wounded, and increased the urgency of the mission of Dennis Ross, the US negotiator.

Last night he held yet another round of talks with Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian Authority President, after ear-

lier meeting Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister. Israel radio said Palestinians were increasingly pessimistic about the chances of an agreement. It quoted one senior Palestinian official as saying that Mr Ross was expected to return to the US before the end of the week.

A CAR driven by a 15-year-old Palestinian boy crashed into a crowded bakery in Jerusalem's main Jewish vegetable market yesterday, killing one person, wounding six and spreading panic about a possible new terrorist attack. Last night police were still trying to establish whether or not the crash was an accident.

The Palestinians have dismissed a new demand by Mr Netanyahu to delay three more Israeli troop withdrawals from the West Bank — planned for after the Hebron pullout — from September 1997 to spring 1999. "The last redeployment is a very, very contentious issue. Our interpretations are very far apart," David Bar-Ilan, the Prime Minister's spokesman said.

Hassan Asfour, the Palestinian negotiator, attacked the proposal, the main sticking point holding up a deal on Hebron. "This is irresponsible," he said. "The agreement specifically states that the last stage of further redeployments from the West Bank be completed by September 7, 1997." Mr Ross was struggling to broker a deal.



Private Noam Friedman, who "tried to kill as many Arabs as possible" when he opened fire in Hebron last week, with investigators

In the pre-dawn re-enactment, an unrepentant Private Friedman declared to investigators: "I wanted to kill as many Arabs as possible." The soldier was surrounded by army guards and wore a bullet-proof vest in case Palestinian gunmen tried to avenge the shooting.

A religious Jew with a history of psychiatric problems, he told investigators that he had deliberately opened fire at Arab shoppers in the hope of scumming the long-

delayed Israeli withdrawal from 80 per cent of Hebron, a city holy to both Jews and Arabs. "I wanted to prove that Hebron is ours, always and forever," he said.

He spoke haltingly into a microphone while handcuffed to a soldier. He also gripped the M16 rifle that he had used in the attack, from which the ammunition clip had been removed. Under Israeli law suspects who confess to major crimes are obliged to re-enact them.

Naked truth enrages Turkish Islamists

FROM ANDREW FINKEL IN ISTANBUL

ATURKISH tabloid sensation over a radical Muslim cleric caught with his trousers down has fuelled a growing rift between the country's media and pro-Islamic government.

Muslim Gunduz, an extreme Islamic sect member, faces five to ten years in prison on charges tantamount to sedition after being apprehended in a raid by Istanbul's anti-terrorist squad.

The manner of his arrest has caused controversy. Police who barged down the door took with them cameramen from some of Turkey's many private television stations. The religious leader was shown on the evening news without clothes and with one of his

female followers, who is in her early twenties.

"It's a very juicy story and a very important one too," said Haluk Sahin, news co-ordinator of Kanal D Television, which helped to break the story. The woman, Fadime Sahin (no relation) has accused Muslim Gunduz of abusing her trust, and the leader of another Islamic religious order of rape.

Such attention is not to the liking of the Welfare Party, the senior partner in the ruling coalition, which has declared war on Turkey's press barons and is trying to curb live broadcasts of events such as shoot-outs between police and suspects.

Mastroianni widow 'liked two of actor's mistresses'

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE widow of the late Marcello Mastroianni, the actor who died last month, revealed warm feelings towards her husband's many famous mistresses yesterday, saying that she had often comforted Marcello "like a sister" when the relationships ended in tears.

Flora Mastroianni said she had liked at least two of her husband's various mistresses, the actresses Faye Dunaway and Catherine Deneuve. Both relationships had been founded on real passion, she said, yet the actor had always maintained the marital home and had refused to divorce her. "In the end, he always

came back to me," Signora Mastroianni told the magazine *Gente*.

She said she had found Deneuve very *sympatica* and approachable, while Dunaway had been "typically American and sophisticated... on the set of *L'Amante* she was always twirling around with a silk scarf on her head".

She said she had no strong views on Mastroianni's last companion, Anna Maria Tatò, "because he didn't talk to me about her, unlike the others".



Deneuve "sympatica" and approachable

Greenpeace sues author over book that 'unveils mystery'

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

A BOOK claiming to disclose the inner workings of Greenpeace has been met with an immediate libel action from the international environmental organisation.

The Hidden Face of Greenpeace — *Infiltration into the Heart of the International Ecology Movement*, published in France this week, describes itself as the latest attempt to penetrate an organisation that has gained huge media publicity for its operations.

The book, written under the pseudonym Olivier Vermont, purports to be the work of an independent French journalist who posed as a militant envi-

ronmental activist to gain access to Greenpeace-France and the headquarters of Greenpeace International in Amsterdam.

Working under cover over ten months, Vermont says he sought to "unveil the mystery" surrounding the group, which employs a large staff and spends millions on environmental operations. Based on his conversations with Greenpeace members, the author alleges among other things, without providing proof, that Greenpeace has "secret dealings with certain states such as China and Russia".

In 1995 Greenpeace reported a worldwide income of \$153 million (£90 million), but

Vermont claims that it maintains a "war chest" of \$128 million, as well as several secret bank accounts. He also accuses Greenpeace of acquiring property and claims that only 6 per cent of the money donated to the group is spent on protecting the environment.

Even before the book appeared in French bookshops on Monday, Greenpeace began a legal counter-attack. Greenpeace International and Greenpeace-France have jointly accused the author and his publisher, Albin Michel, of libellously publishing "defamatory statements, untruths, distortions of the facts and absurd allegations".

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Gingrich apologises for 'brash style' as Speaker

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

A CHASTENED Newt Gingrich yesterday used his narrow re-election as Speaker of the House of Representatives to apologise for his past ethical lapses and arrogance.

"Let me say to the entire House that to the degree I was too brash, too self-confident or too pushy, I apologise," Mr Gingrich told a packed House. "To whatever degree in any way that I have brought controversy or inappropriate attention to the House, I apologise."

It was an extraordinary admission for a belligerent man who has built his political fortunes on absence of self-doubt and a refusal to acknowledge error. Mr Gingrich, whose power was at its peak two years ago when he was first elected Speaker in the "Republican revolution" which seized control of Congress, has seen his authority severely eroded by weeks of ethical investigations which are not yet over.

Although Mr Gingrich managed to win last night's vote, he did not get a majority of the total 435 members of the House, but a Democratic challenge on these grounds was thrown out by the Clerk of the House.

Republicans cheered when Robin Carle, the Clerk, announced that Mr Gingrich had been "duly elected". Mr Gingrich's wife, Marianne, joined in the applause from her seat in the gallery.

Mr Gingrich, who said after a prayer breakfast yesterday that he was "seeking divine guidance", had been constantly on the phone in search of Republican votes. Four senior Republicans opposed Mr Gingrich's candidacy by sup-

porting a Democratic motion for an interim Speaker while the ethics questions about Mr Gingrich are investigated.

The climax to the saga, which has transfixed Washington for weeks, came in a House chamber swarming with members' children, a tradition of the opening day of Congress. Running down the aisles, and tugging on their parents' arms out of boredom, they showed as much impatience as Mr Gingrich for the result.

The Speaker, exiled from his central seat in front of the American flag, strode the aisles clapping members on the back and trying to maintain the appearance of confidence.

Despite the vote, the battle has exacted a heavy penalty from Mr Gingrich. His power, at its height during the 1994 "Republican revolution", was eroded during the campaign, when voters made clear that they viewed his *Contract with America* as unpalatably harsh.

The ethics investigations have further eroded his influence, provoking a shift of power towards Trent Lott, the Republican Senate leader, and now viewed as the most powerful Republican in Washington. Mr Lott has struck up a rapport with President Clinton which could be of crucial importance in next month's battles over the budget.

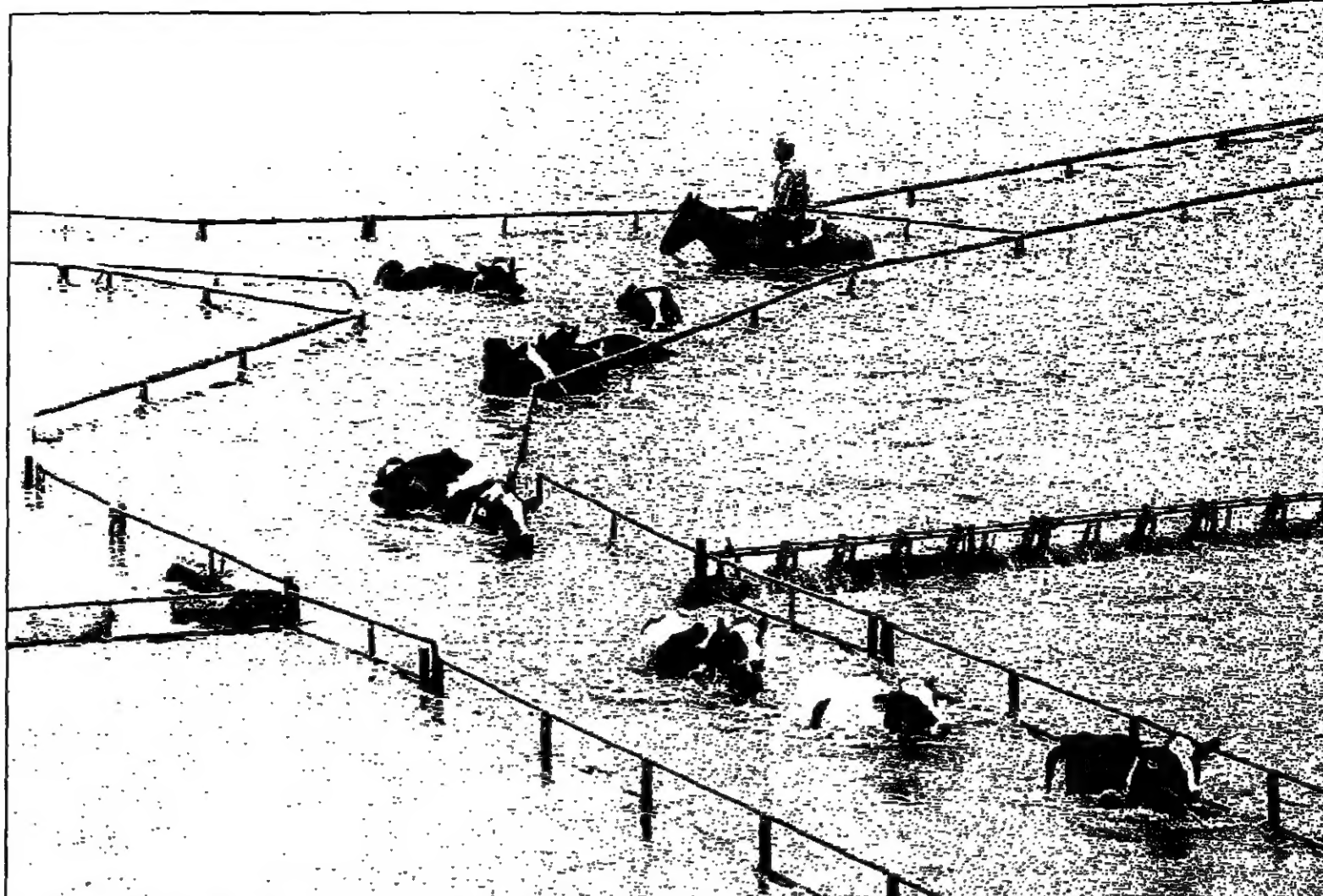
Despite his re-election, Mr Gingrich will spend two uncomfortable weeks before the ethics committee announces his punishment. The Speaker has admitted failing to consult a lawyer about the legality of using charitable donations, which were exempt from taxes, to finance a partisan televised lecture course, and to misleading the ethics committee about the source of the lecture course funds.

For the past two weeks Mr Gingrich has been obliged by his plea bargain with the ethics committee to keep silent, an irksome constraint on his ego.

Democrats are hoping that the Gingrich investigations will divert attention from their own problems. The sexual harassment suit brought against President Clinton by Paula Jones is expected to go to the Supreme Court on Monday.



Gingrich: was silenced by ethics committee



Gene Roberts, a farmer, tries to save some of the 600 cows that were stranded by floods near Modesto, California, after storms which caused 28 deaths (Giles Whitell writes).

The flooding, which came after a series of downpours that began on Boxing Day and lasted until the weekend, has been described by Pete Wilson, the Governor, as the most destructive in the state's history.

Rain and melted snow poured off the Sierra Nevada range into California's Great Central Valley, leaving thousands homeless, stripping

Californians count cost after storm and flood devastation

topsoil from farmland and forcing herds of cattle to swim through neck-deep waters to safety.

Forty-two of California's 58 counties were inundated as mountain torrents burst banks and breached dikes intended to protect the region known as America's salad basket. Early estimates put the cost of repairs at more than \$775 million

(\$461 million) in nine of the counties, where thousands of acres of winter wheat and tomato seedlings were swept away.

Many of the 125,000 people who were moved out of their homes in California and neighbouring states have now left Red Cross centres and begun assessing the damage to their properties. But relief agencies are

still working round the clock in Modesto, west of the mountains, and on the eastern fringe of normally arid Nevada, where the Governor, Bob Miller, said repairs could cost more than \$800 million.

Gales of 70 mph have toppled articulated lorries on to their sides along exposed sections of the main Los Angeles-Las Vegas highway, and closed dozens of main roads.

The disaster was caused when eight feet of snow fell on the Sierra Nevada the weekend before Christmas, then melted in a sudden warm spell over the new year holiday.

Parties condemn Pakistan army role

FROM ZAHID HUSSAIN IN ISLAMABAD

THE newly-formed Council for Defence and National Security, which has institutionalised the role of the military in Pakistan's political power structure, may declare a state of emergency to deal with the worsening political and economic situation.

The move has raised serious doubts that elections will be held on schedule next month as both of the main political parties have rejected the new arrangement, describing it as unconstitutional.

On Monday the interim Cabinet approved the formation of the ten-member council proposed and headed by President Leghari, who is also the supreme commander of the country's armed forces. The other members include the Prime Minister, Defence Minister, Interior Minister, Finance Minister, chief of the joint staff committee and the chiefs of army, navy and air

force. The council is due to hold its first meeting today. Irshad Ahmed Haqqani, the Interior Information Minister, said that its role will be advisory and its decisions not binding on the Cabinet.

The move has provoked a strong reaction from almost all the main political leaders. Benazir Bhutto, the deposed Prime Minister, accused the President of dragging the army into politics to save his job. She said that her party was seriously considering withdrawing from the elections.

Nawaz Sharif, another former Prime Minister, who is the strongest contender for power, said the council could not be set up without the approval of parliament. Imran Khan, who also aspires to be Prime Minister, called the move unconstitutional.

Leading article, page 17

US Supreme Court to rule over right to euthanasia

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

THE US Supreme Court will today begin to tackle the most explosive social issue to come before it for years: whether terminally-ill patients should have the right to hasten death with the help of a doctor.

The question of whether personal freedoms guaranteed by the US Constitution include the right to euthanasia is being heralded as the ethical issue for the next generation, dividing the country in the way abortion has for two decades.

The growing numbers of elderly people are increasingly aware that the most sophisticated and costly medical care in the developed world may prolong life, but still leave them suffering pain and indignity.

Today the nine Supreme Court justices will hear appeals by the states of Washington and New York. The states want to overturn local court

rulings that state bans on doctor-assisted suicide violated the Constitution.

Jack Kevorkian, the retired pathologist who has been present at about 45 deaths and has come to symbolise the "right-to-die" cause, has no part in today's events. The issue "doesn't belong in a courtroom. It's a medical service — it belongs in a clinic, a hospital, a home," he argues.

The Court decision, which will be delivered by the summer, is awaited across the country. Of the 50 states, 49 have banned euthanasia but regard those bans as near-impossible to enforce until the Court ruling. Only Oregon has backed doctor-assisted suicide in law.

The Court's decision is extraordinarily hard to predict. Despite the state bans, America overall has been moving towards legalising euthanasia for two decades. In a land-

mark case in 1976, the parents of Karen Ann Quinlan won court permission to disconnect her life support system.

The Supreme Court has since ruled that people also have the right to refuse medical treatment.

Supporters of doctor-assisted euthanasia brandish examples from Australia's Northern Territory, which legalised the practice in 1995, and from The Netherlands, where it is accepted. Opponents cite religious objections, and a belief that a doctor's role is to prolong life, not end it.

□ Rome: The Vatican yesterday condemned the death of Janet Mills, 52, the second death under Australia's euthanasia law and urged opponents to campaign harder against the "contagion" of assisted suicide, which is "an act of revolt against God, author of life, and a crime against life". (Reuters)

Peru siege rebel fires at police

Lima: Two gunshots, apparently fired by a Tupac Amaru rebel who was seen patrolling the lawn around the besieged Japanese Ambassador's residence here before dawn yesterday, again raised tension around the house where 74 people remain hostage (Gabriella Garnini writes).

The shots appeared to have been fired from the walled garden, in the direction of police posts which are set up outside, a spokesman for the authorities said. The Peruvian police said the rebel "on patrol" had fired at one of their observation posts. No body was injured.

'No big change' in Deng's health

Peking: China has denied that senior leader Deng Xiaoping's health had deteriorated amid a recent bout of reports in Hong Kong that he had been rushed to hospital after periods of unconsciousness (James Pringle writes).

Shen Guofang, of the Foreign Ministry, said there was "no big change" in the 92-year-old leader's health. For an old man, Mr Deng was doing "relatively well", he said.

13 die in blast

Algiers: A powerful car bomb exploded near Place Audin, in the heart of the Algerian capital, killing at least 13 people and injuring 20. No group immediately claimed responsibility. (AP)

Torture plea

Nairobi: Kenya has failed to halt widespread torture involving electric shocks and sexual abuse. Amnesty International said, urging the country's Medical Association to condemn the acts. (Reuters)

Lagos bombing

Lagos: A bomb blew up a Nigerian army bus inside a military camp in Lagos, killing two soldiers and wounding 29 people. It was the third such attack in less than five weeks. (Reuters)

New Sofia leader

Sofia: Bulgaria's ruling Socialists nominated Nikolai Dobrev, 49, the powerful Interior Minister, as Prime Minister to head the country's ninth government since one-party rule ended in 1989. (Reuters)

Tug of love

Peking: Chinese surgeons took 17 hours to reconnect the trunk of Babu, an amorous elephant, after it was severed when it caught in a grating while the animal was playing with a female at a zoo. (AFP)

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Forgotten Gandhi 'remains' to be given Ganges rite

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

THE purported ashes of Mahatma Gandhi, father of independent India, are to be immersed in the Ganges, the holiest of India's rivers. They have been held almost forgotten in a bank vault since 1950. The Supreme Court ruled that the ashes, in a wooden box, should go on a tour of India before being immersed by Tushar Arun Gandhi, the Mahatma's great grandson. He said he expected to empty them in the Ganges at Allahabad on January 30.

He has fought a two-year legal battle for possession of the ashes, deposited in the State Bank of India on November 29, 1950, in the eastern city of Cuttack by an Orissa state official. It is not known why they were there or who had possession of them.

Non-denominational prayers are to be said when the ashes are immersed in honour of Gandhi's struggle for inter-religious harmony.

The Orissa state government questioned whether the ashes were those of the Mahatma. The Supreme Court ruled that there was no reason

to doubt the entry in the bank's safe deposit register.

Gandhi, assassinated by a Hindu fanatic in 1948, was cremated in Delhi. He is largely irrelevant in modern India, and for the first time there is public questioning of some of his "experiments with truth". Extremist Hindus, who hate him for his supposed "appeasement" of Muslims, recently mocked his experiments with sexual discipline, which included sleeping alongside two women a third of his age to prove that he had overcome desire.

Gandhi once said he was convinced he had conquered sexual desire until the morning he awoke in a state of arousal after an erotic dream at the age of 67. He called it his darkest hour, "a frightful experience" 30 years after taking the vow of *brahmacharya* (sexual abstinence). He went on a fast to contemplate what had happened.

But Thackeray, leader of the fanatical Shiv Sena in Bombay, called Gandhi a "complete fraud" in his professed *brahmacharya*. Shiv Sena has links with the RSS, the secretive Hindu brotherhood that inspired Nathuram Godse to assassinate Gandhi.

The Congress party, which led India to independence under Gandhi's guidance, called Shiv Sena's criticism of his sexual experiments the work of "sick minds". All Hindu political parties, save for those on the extreme Right, have condemned Mr Thackeray, who has expressed admiration for Hitler.

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Juppé flies into row over appetite for forbidden songbird



The ortolan: not a meal for the faint-hearted.

FROM BRYN MACINTYRE
IN PARIS

ALAIN JUPPÉ, the French Prime Minister, has flown into another damaging row by admitting to a taste for ortolan or hunting, the songbird beloved by traditional Gallic gourmands but technically protected under French law.

In a recent interview with *Elle* magazine, he discussed the bird, regarded as one of the greatest delicacies in French cuisine, and remarked: "The funny thing about ortolan is that it is forbidden to hunt or sell them but, in the best places, you can still find them."

M. Juppé described in detail how he had snacked on ortolan at a recent Gascon feast, prompting

criticisers, including former actress Brigitte Bardot. The French League for the Protection of Birds has filed an official complaint with the European Commission.

The dispute has overtones of elitism, since the ortolan is regarded as a dish reserved for the rich and powerful, which once prompted Balzac to write: "And as for us, do you think we eat ortolans?"

Adding to the furore is a new book about François Mitterrand which reveals the late President's relish for the little creature. It describes how he once ate two at a single sitting, along with 30 oysters, *foie gras* and a capon.

"While the homeless are dying of hunger and cold, this gastronomic display by ministers and presidents is not only unacceptable

but revolting, thundered Mme Bardot. "Sirs, have a little decency."

The ortolan is a Eurasian garden and field bird which grows fat in France before heading to North Africa and the Middle East in the autumn. Measuring about 6.2in, with a greyish head and pale yellow throat, the bird's song of six or seven notes is similar to the related yellow hammer.

When it lands in France, the ortolan is in a legal limbo. Since it does not figure on the list of approved game birds, hunting it is technically illegal, but since it is absent from the list of protected species, local authorities often turn a blind eye. Ornithologists say the number of ortolans has dropped in recent years since up to 150,000 are

trapped every year as they migrate across southwest France. An ortolan weighing less than an ounce can fetch up to Fr300 (£40) on the black market during August and September.

The ortolan is not a meal for the faint-hearted. After being trapped, the birds are fattened on grain for three weeks. The *coup de grâce* is administered, according to *Le Figaro* newspaper, "with its beak in armagnac, having been deprived of its tiny gizzard".

The bird is then garnished and baked for seven minutes. It is eaten whole, bones, innards and all, crunched in the mouth into a paste and swallowed — a spectacle so unwholly that it traditionally takes place behind a napkin.

"The taste is marvellous, rather like that of *foie gras* with truffles," according to *Le Figaro*.

M. Juppé's injudicious remarks have left him with two unpalatable options: if he stands by his taste buds, the sin of chewing up small songbirds is likely to dent his rock-bottom popularity among environmentalists. But if he renounces his affection for the dish, he will anger not only traditional chefs but also the powerful hunting lobby.

The National Union in Defence of Traditional Hunting has already waded in. "Ortolan hunting has been practised since Roman times and the species has still not disappeared, as far as I know," Jean-Jacques Hague, head of the hunting union, said.



Juppé: snacked on bird at recent Gascon feast

Kidnappings were part of Cold War, says ex-spymaster

FROM ROGER BOYCE IN DÜSSELDORF

MARKUS WOLF, the former Communist spy-master, yesterday rejected official charges of kidnapping agents during the Cold War, and in a rare flash of public anger and passion, launched a blistering attack on the German authorities.

Herr Wolf, who for 30 years led East Germany's spying offensive against the West, was in combative mood on the first day of his trial in the windowless top-security Düsseldorf courtroom originally built for the hearings against his most successful agent, Günther Guillaume. The prosecutor, he said, wanted to put him "in the same ranks as common criminals. I reject these attempts."

Much of the prosecution case was based, he said, on "pure fabrication". He was guided throughout his espionage career by patriotic motives. "Neither the constitution nor the laws of the country I served" were violated.

The German authorities were denied a chance to jail Herr Wolf for treason and espionage three years ago, because the Constitutional Court ruled that this would violate his right to be treated equally with West German spies: all spies should be equal before the law. Instead, the prosecutor "has" advanced three cases from the days of the Cold War and is pressing criminal charges of kidnapping and assault. The test cases include the seizing, in 1955, of a 26-year-old West Berlin woman who was working as a translator for the US authorities in Berlin.

Herr Wolf's East German spies tried unsuccessfully to turn the translator, Christa

Trapp, the spy-master — reading in a firm voice from an eight-page declaration — argued that Western intelligence services carried out many abductions in the east. His defence over the coming months would include a catalogue of Western attempts to force or blackmail East Germans into espionage activity, kidnapping, he made clear, was simply part of Cold War espionage.

Another accusation read out in court was that Herr Wolf approved the arrest of Georg Angerer, a printer and former Gestapo collaborator in occupied Norway. The man knew Willy Brandt — later to be West German Chancellor — as a resistance fighter in Norway. Herr Wolf's agents tried to force Herr Angerer to smear Brandt as a Gestapo informer, and thus destroy his political career. The printer was held for six months and put under psychological pressure, but ultimately the plan collapsed.

In his defence yesterday, Herr Wolf declared that "the exposure of former Nazis was

in contrast to the activities of the West German intelligence organisations — part of the legitimate mission of the East German services". The arrest warrant for Herr Angerer bears the signature Markus Wolf, and is thus one of the few compromising documents against the spy-master.

The final charge concerns a 1962 abduction of a defecting Stasi officer, who was lured to Austria, beaten up, and then returned to East Germany, where he faced a military tribunal and served 10 years' hard labour. According to the prosecutor, Herr Wolf supervised the operation. Herr Wolf denied having any such powers, and blamed other members of the Interior Ministry.

The 73-year-old spy chief — sporting a tan after a skiing holiday — seemed confident of victory. The prosecution case depends heavily on Ms Trapp's readiness to return from the United States to testify. But she is reluctant to do so. The defence will argue that kidnapping charges — one of them 42 years old — fall under the statute of limitations, and can no longer be prosecuted. Herr Wolf said yesterday that the authorities were motivated by revenge.

The Constitutional Court ruling against punishing East German spies had, he said, angered Bonn. "The federal prosecutors were among the unscrupulous winners of the Cold War, and are now showing themselves to be 'bad losers'." The prosecutor, however, is sure he can demonstrate Herr Wolf's involvement — as organiser or supervisor — in the crimes. Organisational charts show that he had direct responsibility for such missions.



Wolf: career "guided by patriotic motives"



Patriarch Aleksii presides at a Russian Orthodox Christmas service in Moscow yesterday. The feast has re-emerged as an important event in Russia

Moscow marks Christmas in rebuilt cathedral

FROM RICHARD BEESTON
IN MOSCOW

MILLIONS of worshippers flocked to churches across Russia yesterday to celebrate the Orthodox Christmas.

Patriarch Aleksii II, leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, led a congregation of hundreds in Moscow for the first Christmas service held in the country's most famous church, the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour since its rebuilding. The church, Russia's largest, was destroyed in 1931 by Stalin during the anti-religious purges and later Khrushchev turned the site into a swimming pool.

The cathedral's multimillion-pound reconstruction over the past two years,

paid for in part by private donations, has stood as a symbol of the rebirth of Orthodoxy in Russia, where churches and monasteries once again are coming to life.

Although the new year remains the main Russian family holiday, Orthodox Christmas, celebrated according to the Julian calendar on January 7, has re-emerged as an important religious event, marked yesterday by packed churches and live television coverage of the services.

The country's political elite, made up mostly of former members of the Soviet Communist Party, was not slow in renewing its courtship of the Church and its tens of millions of adherents. President Yeltsin, who had

been due to go to church, missed the Christmas celebrations and instead spent most of the day in bed at his country home, apparently struck down by a flu virus which has affected several members of his family.

That left the spotlight yesterday on Yuri Luzhkov, the capital's stocky Mayor, who led dignitaries inside the newly finished interior of the cathedral, whose reconstruction is largely due to his personal efforts.

The cathedral, which took 60 years to build in thanksgiving for Russia's defeat of Napoleon, was stripped of its icons, marble and gold leaf before being dynamited on Stalin's orders. Its reconstruction, which is due to be completed this year in time for Mos-

cow's 850th anniversary celebrations, is the centrepiece of several grand building schemes launched by the ambitious Mayor, whom many regard as a future Kremlin leader.

Mr Luzhkov, 50, who is a close friend and supporter of President Yeltsin, won a 90 per cent majority at his mayoral re-election last summer in Moscow. He has since made clear that his ambitions stretch far beyond the limits of the sprawling capital.

In the past few months, he has spoken out on several national issues: in particular he has denounced the Chechnya peace deal as a sell-out and has vehemently challenged Ukraine's sovereignty over Sevastopol. Crimea's disputed port city.

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Russian monkeys return to steppes after space mission

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

TWO Russian monkeys safely touched down on the steppes of northern Kazakhstan yesterday after a two-week mission in space to test the effects of weightlessness on animals and plants.

A Russian Space Forces spokesman said the Bion-11 capsule containing the two Macaque monkeys, Captain Muliik and his colleague Lapik, as well as a collection of snails, insects and plants, returned to earth early on the Russian Orthodox Christmas Day.

The craft was launched on December 24 from the Plesetsk cosmodrome, in northern Russia, where the monkeys had been trained to press pedals and computer keys to get food and drink.

The animals are now undergoing medical tests near the landing site and will then be flown to Moscow, where the Institute of Medical and Biological Problems will study how they readjust to gravity.



Captain Muliik shortly before blasting off

The \$30 million (£17 million) mission was supported by NASA, America's space agency, which put up half the funds, and France, Ukraine and Lithuania.

The space flight, which went ahead despite protests from animal rights groups in America, is the latest in a programme which started in 1973. Further missions are planned next year. The data will help in planning manned flights.

□ Cape Canaveral: NASA cleared the launch of this weekend of the space shuttle Atlantis to bring back the astronaut John Blaha from Russia's Mir space station.

Mr Blaha, who has been living on Mir since September, will be replaced by Jerry Linenger, who will also spend four months aboard the station. It will be the fifth time the shuttle has docked with Mir.

Technicians have tightened the screws in the gearboxes of Atlantis's hatches. A loose one jammed a hatch on her sister shuttle, Columbia in November, forcing the cancellation of two spacewalks.

Engineers concluded that Atlantis's solid-fuel rocket boosters were safe, despite damage that was caused to nozzle insulation on the last two shuttle flights.

Meanwhile, it was announced that ArianeSpace plans to launch at least 18 satellites this year. Roger Solar, the director of ArianeSpace-Kourou, said the number might increase if the new Ariane 5 rocket, which can carry three satellites, is introduced commercially. (AP, AFP)

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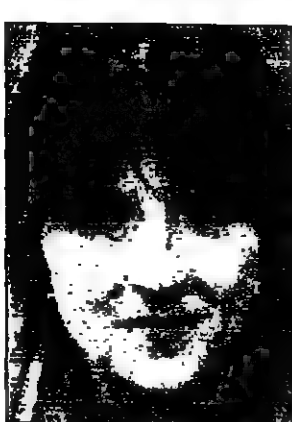
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Is this the start of something big?



The lingerie look: A slip dress in the Philosophy range by Alberta Ferretti



You can keep your lacy scanties, what women really cannot resist is a good, stout pair of drawers. And they're back in a big way, says Jane Shilling

There was a time when an Englishwoman's underwear was an entirely private matter — a confidential arrangement between herself and Marks & Spencer. The only time the whole business ventured, so to speak, into the public arena, was a couple of times a year, at Christmas and birthdays, when one's Significant Other, unless properly trained, would sheepishly produce a heribanded box containing a microscopic three-piece set of something tragically unsuitable, made from scratchy synthetic lace.

The size, on these occasions, tends to show evidence of an onset of wild panic (or reprehensible fantasy) in the lingerie shop, the colour (horrid shades of cerise, mauve or eau-de-nil) is enough to bring on migraine, and the solution to the whole sorry business lies in a visit, after a tactful interval, to the Oxfam shop. This aside, and despite everything that the advertisers would have us believe to the contrary, there exists in the mind of the British female absolutely no connection between underwear and sex, still less underwear and fashion. What we require from our underwear is that it should be warm, decent and comfortable — and above all, that it should not Draw Attention To Itself.

Season after recent season, however, the catwalks of Paris and Milan have been thronged with slips of girls with nothing between them and the elements but a weeny bra worn under a cob-web blouse, or a couple of square inches of bias-cut satin. Still, this is the sort of thing we expect from the Continent. On this side of the Channel, the siren lure of underwear as outerwear continues to fall on deaf ears.

"Come out in her smalls, what does she think she looks like?" muses the Englishwoman, as she turns the pages of a glossy magazine during her annual visit to the hairdressers. "Catch her death, poor dear," she mentally adds, warm in the cosy embrace of her Damart vest... "This season," enthuses the editorial, "you will be partying in your petty." Hurumph, thinks the Englishwoman, resolving to get her faithful old taffeta warhorse dry-cleaned for the umpteenth time.

But good gracious, hang on a minute, what is this, shining like a beacon from every single new season's collection? It is a pair of big knickers, that's what. And when I say big, I mean huge. Suddenly they are everywhere, knickers of a size and voluminousness not seen since your grandma last changed into her bathing costume on the beach beneath a modest tent of floral towelling some time back in 1963.

In the spring collections, Romeo Gigli puts them under a lampshade-shaped shift of glitzy tulle; at Prada they are waist-high under blood-red chiffon, while Anna Molinari offers a tantalising vision of white schoolgirl pants splashed with blood-red puppies

beneath a tube of Elastoplast-coloured crochet. Versace has possibly the most splendid pair of all — an imposing article in lemon-yellow satin of a cut so generous that it would undoubtedly double as a most efficient parachute.

Now, Englishwomen have a very special place in their hearts for big knickers. It is all to do with our education. When small we were exhorted by our mamas to put a clean pair on in the mornings no matter what; at school we were made to wear them for gymnastics; those of us educated by nuns think fondly of hours idled away in ribald speculation as to the sisters' underpinnings... In short, you can keep your lacy scanties. What we really cannot resist is a stout pair of drawers.

And stout is what these improbable additions to the lexicon of high fashion are. They have high waists, and lacrimated legs, and Firm Control panels to the front (and in one arresting example, the rear as well). There is very little chance that Dolce and Gabbana's leopardskin bloomers will disappear up the crack in your bottom.

And what perfect heaven to have that troublesome hardy perennial, the Visible Panty Line, suddenly transformed into a positive virtue. It is enough to make one rush straight out to Knightsbridge for a close encounter into Haute Couture.

Except that if one does, one is liable to be disappointed. The buyers have not fallen in love with Big Knickers. They do not think the customers are ready for them. "I can't see people walking through Knightsbridge dressed like that," says Lucille Lewin of Whistles. "For the beach, maybe," says Françoise Tessier of Browns, "but not in the street. The husbands won't stand for it."

Now, in France and Italy you can well imagine that a man, finding his wife dressed in Sonia Rykiel's wisp of black lace with salmon-coloured knickers, would commence to yell and then order her to change into something decent on pain of stopping her dress allowance. Here, though, one can be fairly sure that if one appeared in Versace's lemon-yellow *pièce de résistance* and said, "Darling, tell me honestly, what do you think?" one's husband would raise his glance momentarily from the sports pages and say nothing more controversial than "Mmm. Very nice. What a bloody shower in Zimbabwe, eh?"

Still, all is not lost. Couture knickers may be thin on the ground, but the high street knows better than to underestimate the potential market for a proper pair of pants. Hennes and Miss Selfridge and Sloggi and faithful old Marks & Spencer are heaving with stretch damask and lace insets and criss-cross Lycra panels, and not a thong in sight. And I myself have seen, at Rigby & Peller, a capacious garment in pale pink silk and cream net, which, if it turned up on my birthday in a ribboned box, definitely wouldn't be making the trip to the Oxfam shop.



Dolce & Gabbana's bloomers



Kate Moss proudly shows off her big panties, courtesy of Dolce & Gabbana

WHERE TO BUY THE BEST BIG KNICKERS

Warners white lace control panties, £23 M-XL. National inquiry number: 01159 795 796.

Peach "Mistral" big knickers by Chamos, £14.50. From all major department stores.

White French knickers by Marks & Spencer, £7.50.

Big blue sports knickers by Miss Selfridge, £8.00.

Black big satin knickers with rear fly edging, £50 from Agent Provocateur, 6 Broadwick Street, London W1. Tel: 0171-439 0229.

Blue floral devoré French knickers, £20, by Eley Kishimoto at

Pellicano 63 South Molton Street, W1. Tel: 0171-629 2205.

Ivory satin floral print big knickers by Prima Donna, £34.50, from Rigby and Peller, 2 Hans Road SW3. Tel: 0171-589 8283.

Black and grey check full briefs by Marie Jo, £37.50, from Rigby and Peller.

White high-waisted big knickers by Barbara, £44.50, from Rigby and Peller.

White elasticated waist knickers with hilly lace edging by Patricia, £27.50, from Rigby and Peller.

The discreet handbag makes a comeback

Stylish women need something classic to clutch, says Grace Bradberry

The handbag is making a quiet comeback. Sales of designer leather goods are up, and this ski season Eurotrash woman has chosen Dior's Lady Di handbag as the perfect match for her real fur coat.

But handbags no longer possess the brazen personalities they did ten years ago, when they would clank into any gathering, gold chains rattling, outside logos flashing. By comparison, they're now discreet little things, at best suave and elegant, at worst mousey.

Even the chicest among them do not like to shout too loud. Lulu Guinness's are quietly witty; Anya Hindmarch's are shapely, smooth and never shout wealth or status; Prada's have, as everyone now knows, the finest of triangular labels.

Brash is out, and the old-fashioned values such as discretion and modesty are returning. A small handbag once again denotes class, a large one poor taste. Reactionaries with money to spend, little in the way of personality,

and not a lot to carry round, will be delighted. Rebellion is on the horizon for the rest of us. Forget Evita and her dizzy little Dior bags, what did Che Guevara carry his kit around in? Not a collection of tailored Marks & Spencer carriers, one imagines.

No matter how much we loathe the baggage that comes with bags, it's impossible to dissociate ourselves from something when it's clasped in our hands. And since psychoanalysts would have us believe that handbags symbolise a woman's sexual organs, it's a terrible mistake to

transport one's belongings in something that's saggy and battered.

If labels are important, and your essentials compact, then a designer make-up bag could solve the dilemma. For £45, you can nip into Prada and buy a soft, black, zip-up case, that will fit perfectly at the side of the hunchtable, or can be kept firmly under your foot if you don't wish to pay.

Shopping bags — rooney and utilitarian — have been fashion items in their own right for some time. Portobello Princesses have a

whole stock: coloured nylon string bags from the Courtenay Shop for their guavas, checked Mexican bags imported by Emma Bernhard for browsing the second-hand shops. When entering a chichi boutique, a well-stuffed, apparently brand new designer bag is best — it suggests serious intent.

Sadly, you can no longer take a heavily logo-ed carrier bag anywhere but a shop, as Kate Reardon, fashion director of Taffer, points out: "If you're not going to carry a handbag it should mean you're secure enough not to need the designer label at all."

Ironically, this can make a DKNY bag more useful than one from the Donna Karan mainline. Even so, you'll have to part with £150 for an item sufficiently bulky to merit the full-size carrier.

But there is only one way in which you can avoid this minefield altogether. "The best thing is your boyfriend's pocket," says Kate Reardon. "That's the point of going shopping with a man. They're mobile handbags."

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A passion for high adventure



Sir Francis Chichester, left, was knighted for sailing single-handed around the world. Richard Branson, above, follows in the footsteps of the great adventurers. Howard Hughes, right, revelled in his record-breaking flights

In the tradition of explorers and adventurers before him, Richard Branson has given back to the British public a character feared, lost forever.

He has restored our love for conquest and the thrill of danger with a plot worthy of Jules Verne. With no new lands to discover, peaks to conquer, or ocean depths to plumb, there was only one option left — onwards and upwards in the flight path of Pegasus.

By popular consent, Mr Branson can now claim the title "Britain's last great adventurer". His own money, enthusiasm and courage propel him.

His predecessors would applaud. Like the Virgin magazine, they too had a romantic streak. Adventure was to be undertaken for its own sake — not for commercial gain or personal glory.

But there was always an element of obsession, perhaps a touch of madness, with some. They would test themselves and their fellows to the very limit.

Scott of the Antarctic's reputation has been secured by claims that his mistakes en route for the South Pole cost brave men their lives. Forty years ago, Sir Raymond Priestley, who survived as a member of the expedition's northern party, attacked his leader for "disorganisation and psychologically handicapping his men".

The attack caused a public outcry even though Sir Raymond tempered his criticism with praise. "Scott's errors were more than atoned for by the manner of his death," he said.

An English upper-class sang-froid characterised the great adventurers of the past. They never quaked at danger or shied away from impossible odds.

Among the Boys' Own hall of fame luminaries who inspired the young Mr Branson was Colonel Percy Fawcett, a British explorer who surveyed the borders of Bolivia and Brazil before disappearing in the Amazon forest.

As Richard Branson attempts his record-breaking flight, Bill Frost looks at the intrepid explorers who preceded him

The colonel's obituary in 1925 spoke of his "dangerous but admirable passion for adventure". Like Mr Branson, Fawcett always paid his own way. In the course of his expeditions to uncharted jungles he was to become obsessed with tribal legends about mysterious light-skinned people and fabulous cities. Finding these "castles in the air", as one commentator

the subject of contemporary myth and legend. So effectively had he captured the public imagination that stories circulated for 30 years after his disappearance that Fawcett was alive and well in the jungle. The author Evelyn Waugh used the Fawcett legend as the basis for the dark conclusion to his novel *A Handful of Dust*.

The Victorian mountaineer Edward

HUTTON GETTY



Percy Fawcett, the explorer who disappeared in the Amazon jungle

described them, became his mission. On his first trip to the Amazon basin, Colonel Fawcett was accompanied by his son Jack, 21, and another young man, Raleigh Rimell. They set out from the town of Curitiba on the edge of the Mato Grosso on April 20, 1925, and by May had reached a place the colonel named Dead Horse Camp.

Plagued by insects and ravaged by fever, they pressed deeper into the jungle in search of the lost city of "Z". Fawcett wrote one last letter to his wife — that was the last that was ever heard of him. Rescue expeditions were launched and some of the party's equipment was found. It was believed that Fawcett "paid the highest price for his pursuit of a great adventure".

In the absence of a body he became

Whymer was hewn from the same rough stone as his fellow adventurers. Neither deprivation nor danger deterred him as he set about carving his reputation. When in 1865 he finally reached the summit of the Matterhorn, he was undoubtedly the most celebrated "alpinist" in Europe.

He was soon to cast his eye over more exotic summits and decided to explore the Andes.

The freelance adventurer, whose lease on fame began in earnest during Victoria's reign, would seldom suffer fools or cowards lightly.

Some, though, have no need of others. The aviator Charles Lindbergh, who electrified his country in 1927 by making the first solo crossing of the Atlantic, revelled in his nickname —

The Lone Eagle. In an era of flappers, gangsters, bathtub gin and self-indulgence, the shy, laconic Lindbergh was almost a god to his countrymen.

When, five years after the epic flight, his baby son was kidnapped from the Lindbergh home in a backless section of New Jersey, the nation was stunned. And then, when the infant was found buried four miles from the house, the whole world was enraptured.

After the killer was found, tried, and sentenced to the electric chair, Lindbergh was to settle in Kent. However, his passion for adventure was dead.

A New York newspaper columnist of the day remarked: "He was never happier than when alone at the controls. Reality was Lindbergh's problem."

Howard Hughes, perhaps the most mysterious of the great adventurers, suffered similar difficulties in later life, although his record-breaking flight around the world — three days, 19 hours and 17 minutes — saw him lauded as a national hero.

The solitude he craved 20 years later was in sharp contrast to his obvious pride when greeted by spectators at Floyd Bennett airport, New York. With his crew of four, Hughes had smashed a world record and "experienced the greatest adventure life has to offer".

He added: "I am glad to be back. The worst thing about the trip was lack of sleep, just four hours in the whole trip."

The adventurer must also be prepared to suffer a hard tack diet and hunger. Sir Francis Chichester, the lone sailor who achieved fame at pensionable age in 1967 after his circumnavigation of the world in *Gypsy Moth IV*, frequently dreamt of a fried breakfast.

Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, a yachtsman inspired by Sir Francis and the first person to sail non-stop around the world in 1968-69, indulged in food fantasies too.

Perhaps Sir Francis best summed up the spirit of the breed in the journal he wrote while at sea.

"The adventurous amateur sets himself tasks from which seasoned professionals might shrink. He plays his hand in the grand manner, triumphantly trumping the aces of all comers in the great game of adventure."

"It is only by submitting to trial that an individual can learn to know what is in him. Most of us are content to pass over the surface of life. We have not."

HOW WOULD LLOYD'S EXPLORE THE POLICY RISKS?

THE MAN at the Association of British Insurers was adamant — there is no such thing as a standard explorers' all-risk insurance policy.

Marco Polo, Captain Cook, Scott of the Antarctic, Charles Lindbergh and now Richard Branson each have to thrash out the details of individually tailored policies.

"The first thing insurance companies will want to know is their claims experience [claims history]," said the expert. "The claims experience of an adventurer setting off from Italy, taking in the Dutch East Indies and ending up in America is difficult to say."

Every explorer has to be looked at on their own merits. For example, some parts of the world are more dangerous than others. How do you measure the risks of hauling sledges across the icy wastes of the Antarctic with trekking up-country in Borneo's tropical rainforests?

The Times went to a hardened Lloyd's underwriter for his assessment of the risk when it comes to the world's greatest — and sometimes endearingly eccentric — explorers. Reg Brown, underwriter of K.E. Brown and Others, Syndicate 702 at Lloyd's, graded them in an all-time risk league table. Starting with the riskiest, they are:

1 Scott of the Antarctic; 2 Percy Fawcett; 3 Edward Whymer; 4 Captain Cook; 5 Christopher Columbus; 6 Charles Lindbergh; 7 Howard Hughes; 8 Sir Francis Chichester; 9 Richard Branson; 10 Sir Robin Knox-Johnston.

Mr Brown said that it is easy to underwrite with hindsight. Of course, we now know that Scott and Fawcett never returned. However, by the standards of the time, they were taking an enormous risk with their lives, he said.

Generally he believes that the more contemporary the explorer, the less the risk. Advances in communications

and technology mean that rescue is only a mayday call via satellite link away.

"Look at the sailor adrift off Antarctica in his yacht," said Mr Brown. "We know that 100 years ago he would not have a chance, so survivability, particularly for seafarers, is that much greater. I would have said Branson's chances of survivability are consider-

able, certainly when compared with Scott's."

Mr Brown has a special affection for the exploits of Captain Cook.

"Underwriters in those days might have thought the Earth was flat and that he would one day sail off the edge of the globe."

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Alan Coren



Like a condemned man, I've just enjoyed my last luxury

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. But though the two cities connected in this surly tale were once again English and French, and while the former was still London, the latter was no longer Paris; it was Nice. And it was precisely what connected them which makes the tale so sorry. What connected them was British Airways. Flying to Nice on New Year's Eve was the best of times; flying back to London three days later was the worst. For December 31, 1996 was the end of an era.

Let us now roll down the arches of the years to the apogee of that era, and peer, through our willing tears, at a full-page colour advertisement from a 1955 *Punch*. It is, after the vogue of the time, not a photograph but a painting, and it presents us with a man and a woman so effulgently handsome, so effortlessly elegant, so patently sophisticated, that beside them Rex Harrison and Margaret Leighton would look like Rab C. Nesbitt and Nora Baty. Fortunately for Rex and Margaret, however, the only person beside them, as they sit, languidly arranged in two pale blue *fauteuils*, is a tall uniformed cove, standing in respectful half-bow, one tanned hand behind his back, offering them something on a silver salver. It is not champagne, because the couple are already holding two golden flutes (the artist, let me say, is a dab hand at titchy bubbles), nor is it slivers of foie gras, because a dish of these nestles toothsome before them on a little table. It is a packet of du Maurier cigarettes.

In which delightful scene, two highly significant further details must be noted: the first is that the lawn uniform is that of British European Airways, and the second is that the brace of nickels lying on the table beside the blobs of goose have "London-Nice" printed on them. Yes, this is an airliner, it is flying to the French Riviera, and its owners are pulling out all the stops to make a couple of smokers happy.

The object of the entire cheery composition, of course, being to make millions of other smokers happy; they will be made happy by buying du Maurier cigarettes, for in so doing they will confer upon themselves at least a fagworth or two of the shimmering glamour efflorescing, as dazzlingly as kryptonite, off these airborne paragons. That, at any rate, is what the agency told the gathered manufacturers, at which point all the manufacturers began nodding vigorously, because they too could conceive of no more beguiling an aspiration than winging to Nice beside a feigning partner, poking major liver into their faces, sluicing it down with Dom Perignon, and, of course, topping it off with an easeful drag on their splendid product. They would be Scott and Zelda. Edward and Wallis, for was that not what the dream of Nice was all about?

Oh, it was, and — you guessed? — for the Corens too. Soppily addicted these 30 years to both the selfsame dream and the selfsame stimulants, they have flown down to Nice, perhaps a hundred times, not mind, eating foie gras, this having been replaced in Economy by a fino sandwich and a tinned peach, but invariably drinking champagne from tiny bottles and puffing cigarettes from large carions. And always on BA, the last carrier to permit smoking.

Now do you sense it? The era ending? It is December 31, 1996, and the Corens are yet again dreaming their way down to Nice, fazz bubbling into their mouths, smoke wafting from their nostrils, they are happy bunnies in their tiny blue-fogged warren at the rear — until, as the aircraft turns on its final approach over the diamond-strung Promenade des Anglais and the No Smoking sign wink on, the steward leans over (not so very differently from that other steward, in 1955) and tells them they are part of history. For this is the last smoking flight to Nice that there will ever be. On New Year's Day, BA goes cold turkey.

The Corens had not known this. They are aghast. The steward, a kindly man, sees this, and says: "Have you thought about nicotine tablets?" A stricken Coren shakes his head, mute; but he is thinking about them now, as he stubs out the last thing he will ever smoke, up here. He is thinking: you cannot chew a Nicorette and drink champagne at the same time. He is thinking: the No Dreaming sign has just winked on.



HOT-AIR BALLOONING

Peter Brooks

Bunkering the Union

John Major has made his first mistake of the election campaign by trying to stifle constitutional debate

When medieval knights departed for the crusades, they lavished gifts on their patron saints. Shrouns would be covered in candles, incense and precious cloths. Charity and forgiveness would be lauded with psalms. The knights would then kiss their ladies goodbye, gather a retinue of black-eyed ruffians and march away to relentless pillage and rape.

Thus do modern politicians embark on an election campaign. The saints of reason and good government are forgotten. Their acolytes are locked in a convent and the keys are hidden. The party leaders rush headlong into the mire. Not even Monty Python could have scripted this week's opening skirmish of the 1997 campaign, a charade of homosexual blackmail, dirty-tricks consultants, "presidential" interviews and actors with red tears. We have at least three months of this ahead of us. The prospect is awful.

One reasonable question has nonetheless escaped to survive an extra week. Since we may be at a turning point in the politics of Britain and Britain-in-Europe, might the constitution deserve revision? The question is one on which the "sovereign tribunal of the people" might welcome debate. The start of an election is a good moment for such a debate, when the democratic juices are running but not yet polluted. Hence the recent talks between the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties, to which the Tories were invited. Just one Tory MP, Hugh Dykes, accepted.

Only the most insecure of statesmen could be alarmed by this. Yesterday the Prime Minister was alarmed. He rushed onto the radio to disclaim any interest in constitutional reform. He was strongly opposed to proportional representation, to regional devolution, to changing the House of Lords and to a Bill of Rights. Over all these he expected the right as prime minister to decide. Constitutional change is his prerogative. He signed the Maastricht treaty and refused to submit it to a referendum. Now he refuses to say, before the election, whether he favours any devolution of monetary power to European institutions, though he has changed his mind in favour of a referendum.

As for the people of Scotland, even if they want more control over their government, he would not give it to them. He will not give more control to the people of London either. On the other hand, he is in favour of devolution to the smaller political entity of Northern Ire-

land. One form of devolution, he says, would lead to the "break-up of the United Kingdom", the other apparently not.

This is all intellectually incoherent. Mr Major would argue that the British constitution is incoherent anyway. He expects to do what he likes with it between elections — and remain silent about it during them. Besides, his aides point out, nobody really cares about the subject. It features in no poll or focus group and can thus be dismissed as the plaything of London intellectuals and radicals. The topic has reared its head only so that Labour can conceal its lack of clarity in more substantial areas of policy. The Tories are too cunning to fall into that trap.

The thing about Mr Blair's traps is that the Tories both spot them and fall into them. Were the current constitutional debate a Labour trick, the gambit would be to portray the Tory Government as stale and tired, antagonistic towards the Scots and bereft of vision or inspiration. Yet the trick worked. Mr Major's response was to sound defensive and carp at his critics — which a Prime Minister should be advised never to do. For Mr Major to claim that empowering the Scots to raise (or lower) local taxes would break up the United Kingdom is dishonest. He once enjoyed just such powers as a Lambeth councillor without dire consequences. Besides, if he thinks devolution is so disastrous, why not submit it to open debate? Why this fear of argument? Why this terror of democracy?

If there is one mentality that will cripple the Tories in the coming months, it is that of the bunker. The party is up against a sophisticated enemy that can pick targets at will. "New Labour, New Danger" was not a bad slogan. Attack is a time-honoured form of defence. Mr Major can be an effective performer and the economy is his strong card. Yet every sally ends in self-inflicted injuries, with the bunker sending out an SOS for loyal donors. Downing Street is long past needing loyalty. It needs cool heads.

So there was every reason for the Tories to be open-minded about the constitution. In the first place, Labour's review was perfectly sensible. On any democratic index, Britain lags behind most countries in Europe. It has the fewest elected representatives per thousand voters at each government tier. Its local democracy is weaker than any, and is alone in Europe in enjoying no fiscal discretion. Its internal mechanisms are also quite inadequate to cope with the mass of European legislation descending on Whitehall. All this merits a reassessment, preferably by a royal commission.

Labour's own constitutional proposals are at best half-formed and Mr Blair's pledges are half-hearted. They would offer easy targets for Tory criticism based on a commission, establishing which would instantly spike Labour's guns. The whole topic could have been turned to Mr Major's advantage. Instead, Labour has been able to present itself as fresh-thinking, mature and above party pettiness. The Tories have been left pleading that talk of constitutional reform is "profoundly dangerous". Dangerous to whom? The voters can reasonably ask to be judges of that.

The constitution is under review well beyond the gilded chambers of Westminster and Whitehall. Whatever else last night's TV debate on the monarchy may have been, it was not. Nor does any sort of my acquaintance believe for one minute that all devolution must threaten the Union. Nor does it make sense for the Tories to complain bitterly about Brussels' subsidiarity, yet forbid its consideration in British local government. The huge changes brought in by the Single European Act and Maastricht have radically affected democratic accountability. Had Mr Major taken this aboard, he might have saved himself a great deal of trouble these past four years. Equally seismic changes have occurred in relations between cen-

tral and local government in Britain. Last month's *Economist* survey on democracy predicted that it was the ideology most likely to be transformed in the 21st century; if only because its enemies in the 20th have been trounced. Voters, as they become more prosperous, more leisured and less deferential, will seek new forms of expression. They will want direct participation between elections, other than through the opinion polls beloved of British politicians. They will want more intimate local control of the public sector. They will seek a closer link to elected representatives, and a more sceptical link to government.

No politician can any longer say, as Mr Major does on devolution, that voters should merely trust them to know and do what is best. Politicians who hold to this 19th-century view are losing respect and support. Public trust is transferred to interest groups, lobbies and geographical factions. Intermediate democracy withers and governments rely on opinion polls and referendums, which are poor surrogates for participation.

Democracy may not always need surgery, but it always needs a check-up. Westminster is currently beleaguered from below and above. It is ludicrous to maintain that it is fine as it is. I believe a future Labour government poses as much of a constitutional threat as Tory apathy does. Mr Blair's Labour Party is demonstrating the same centralist authoritarianism as Margaret Thatcher's Tories did. Mr Blair has seized party power from the unions, the constituencies, the conference and even the National Executive Committee. This parallels Margaret Thatcher's seizing of power from what were once the engines of Tory activism, the Tory groups on county and city councils. Both are examples of personalising the constitution.

The Tories may be a lost cause on this topic, but Labour needs to be watched. Mr Blair has not been steady-handed, witness his confusion over London and Scotland. On devolution and rate-capping, he has been as scared of the Treasury *in absentia* as he presumably would be in office. But he has made an effort. He was right to invite bipartisan debate on reform. In doing so, Labour respected both the seriousness of the subject and the intelligence of the electorate. If the great question is now to be locked away for the duration, those who care about these things have at least been given a taste of freedom. They can see where the key is hidden.

Simon Jenkins

Raw Deal?

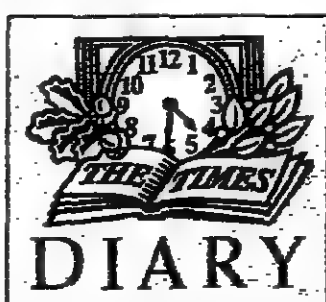
PRINCES, property and pot-throwing residents: it has all the stuff of a Tom Sharpe novel. There is uproar in Kent over the imminent sale by the Ministry of Defence of the Royal Marines School of Music at Deal, where 11 bandmen were killed when a 50lb Semtex bomb exploded in 1999.



Marines on the march

The MoD is on the point of concluding a deal to sell the Georgian barracks to a company called Dukeminter. David Shaw, the local MP, is investigating: "I have traced the parenthood of the company to Liechtenstein," he said. "I want the southern barracks preserved for the community, and I don't trust the developers. The MoD is still offloading property." Talk is of retail development, supermarkets and a road slicing through the south of the Georgian site. Local opposition is growing, with attempts to establish a charitable trust to buy the site and put Dukeminter off the scent. Hillier Parker, agents for the sale, refused to comment yesterday, and the MoD said it was not in a position to confirm the deal.

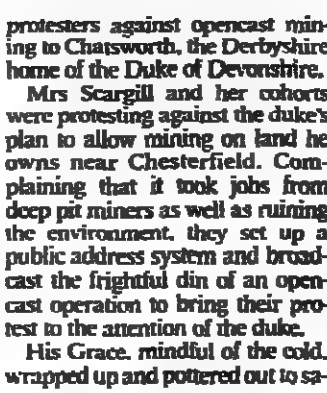
Hopes now rest upon the intervention of the Prince of Wales, who last week launched the Phoenix Trust to take care of redundant institutional buildings. He is said to be taking up the cudgels, following in the footsteps of Noël Coward. "It is a very handsome



Georgian barrack block," said Giles Worsley, editor of the *Derbyshire* home of the Duke of Devonshire. Mrs Scargill and her cohorts were protesting against the duke's plan to allow mining on land he owns near Chesterfield. Complaining that it took jobs from deep pit miners as well as ruining the environment, they set up a public address system and broadcast the frightful din of an open-cast operation to bring their protest to the attention of the duke.

His Grace, mindful of the cold, wrapped up and pattered out to salute their endeavours. He carried with him a tureen of soup — fine consommé probably, with a dash of sherry — and began ladelling. "He was such a gent to everybody that we couldn't get cross with him," said Mrs Scargill. "He was dead straight about why he was mining — he needs the money."

While the English National Opera dreams of moving to a brand new opera house, a salutary lesson on big projects comes from John Harrison, technical director of the Royal Opera. The prospect of touring London as Covent Garden closes for two years for rebuilding is depressing: "I think morale is down now," he says in the internal magazine, *UpRohr*. "I just hope we can get to the end of the season."



Devonshire in Derbyshire

Lobby fodder

AFTER Max Clifford's spectacular doing-over of Jerry Hayes, his supposedly more elevated competitors will have their say in Michael Cockerell's new television documentary *A Word in The Right Ear* about political lobbyists, to be shown tomorrow on the BBC.



He has managed to lure Baroness Thatcher's handsomely collared PR man Sir Tim Bell on screen to discuss his art. "I am being told that we go around the place bribing MPs to change policy to suit our clients. All I can tell you is I wish I had that power, because if I did I would have every single client there is and I would be sitting on a mountain in Bermuda at this moment — a mountain of cash at that."

P.H.S

Safe in Labour's hands?

Stephen Pollard thinks Tory NHS reforms will stay

Max Clifford's personal vendetta against the Government is based, he tells us, on "what they have done to the health service". The only way to turn the clock back is, he believes, to bring about a Labour government. But Mr Clifford has been listening too much to what Labour says, rather than realising what it will do.

Although Labour now accepts that the market is a good thing, its rhetoric still reflects fundamentalist beliefs about the scope of market mechanisms. The purpose of markets is to bring order out of chaos, but many Labour thinkers still assume that they create chaos out of order. The party's policy towards the NHS is the clearest demonstration.

The administration of the NHS, as well as the concept of a free service, has been one of the pillars of Labour mythology: a national organisation, with up to a million employees, centrally financed and controlled. So when Margaret Thatcher surprised even her own Health Secretary during the 1987 election campaign by talking of the need for administrative reform, the Labour Party was united in its hostility. Decentralisation by means of the internal market was seen as an unnecessary threat to the integrity of the service — ultimately as an attempt at privatisation.

Although Tony Blair has changed Labour's good deal, its quasi-religious conviction that provision of healthcare by anyone but the State is immoral, and that the old centralised NHS administration was well-run, means that Labour's health thinking has yet to be hit by reality. But on the first day of the next Labour government, reality will enforce a rethink.

Until very recently, Labour was opposed to the separation of purchasers and providers within the service which is an integral part of the reforms. But the overwhelming evidence is that the split works. And many of those who have pointed this out are Labour supporters. So, very gingerly, the policy has been changed. No revelation has been proclaimed, but Labour has gradually stopped attacking the split in speeches and documents. No one who speaks for Labour will now criticise it. They will argue that it needs refining, but grudgingly they concede that the division between purchaser and provider will be retained. Yet, placating the party regulars, there is also talk of how the split must be made compatible with "strategic health planning, and must be subject to 'proper democratic control'".

In practice, this means little. The party will say scarcely anything about the issue, and in government will maintain the status quo. Arguing that Labour will abolish the internal market, while keeping the purchaser-provider split, is intellectually contradictory but politically necessary.

A similar phenomenon is evident when it comes to NHS trusts. Labour initially opposed all new trusts as being a way of privatising the NHS. As separate legal entities, they could in theory be sold to the private sector. Here again Labour's rhetoric has been steadily muted as reality has impinged. The U-turn is not so very clear, here, but the trend is away from attacking trust status *per se* and towards attacking the composition of trusts as being part of the "quangocracy". The reality of further restructuring is again beginning to make itself felt. Labour thinking is now directed towards addressing the accountability of trusts, rather than their right to exist.

Fundholding offers another example of the difference between rhetoric and reality. Labour's main concern is the "two-tier system", which gives a head-start to patients whose GP is a fundholder. Two approaches are logically possible: abolition and extension.

Comparing the location of fundholding practices with a map of marginal constituencies which Labour needs to win shows that the party cannot commit itself to abolition. Fundholding is popular with those who benefit, and the party will alienate those people if it commits itself to abolition (the same is true of grant-maintained schools). In practice, there is only one possible approach: some form of extension. Under the guise of abolishing fundholding, a Blair government would instead make all GPs fundholders, by making the concept far more flexible. Those practices that wished to carry on pretty much as now would be able to. Those that did not would be grouped with other practices, with pooled administration. But Labour can't say so, because that would be to concede that the reforms work. Instead, Labour has committed itself to replacing fundholding with "commissioning GPs". Whether this amounts to the abolition or merely a refinement of present policy depends on how you define fundholding.

Backward-looking and out-of-touch as the Labour manifesto will seem on health, Labour's policy in government will actually extend the internal market. Because it is trusted to look after the NHS, Labour can do things that the discredited Tories could find virtually impossible. Labour could achieve further devolution of responsibilities to the trusts, and could justify this as part of its programme of devolving power back to communities. The further into government one looks, the easier it becomes to see Labour taking the reform of healthcare further than the Tories would dare. The author is director of research at the Social Market Foundation.



AMERICAN ZERO

Why Blair and Howard are both drawn to US models

From Cannon, Kojak, and Columbo in the 1970s through to *Hill Street Blues* in the 1990s, we have long been used to American detectives dominating our television screens. In recent times, British politicians have imitated their American counterparts in the quest for law and order. The two most unacknowledged but manifestly influential individuals on policy towards crime prevention in this country over the past five years have been the Governor of California and the Mayor of New York, the political leaders of, respectively, the most populous state and city in the United States.

First, Michael Howard at the Home Office took over the policies of mandatory minimum sentences and maximum prison building associated with Pete Wilson, of California. Now, with his forthright interview to *The Big Issue*, Tony Blair, like Jack Straw before him, has endorsed the so-called "zero tolerance" approach to criminality pioneered with impressive results by Rudolph Giuliani of New York. Britain's voters will be choosing between different, but not incompatible, American models of crime prevention when they eventually get their say at the polls.

There is a certain irony in all this. Mr Howard wastes no opportunity to display his Thatcherite credentials. Mr Blair may have dumped socialism but will go no further than social democracy. Yet both have ultimately emulated the two leading centrist Republicans America has to offer. This attention is well justified. Many politicians have aimed for the reputation of a tough moderate. Governor Wilson and Mayor Giuliani have managed that rare feat and reaped the accompanying electoral rewards.

There is a subtle difference in the anti-crime strategies adopted on either side of the American coastline. In California, the emphasis has been placed on reversing the assumption of potential offenders that their

capture would not result in substantial punishment. Governor Wilson, followed by Mr Howard, has set about disabusing that notion through new lengths of imprisonment with minimal opportunity for parole. Mayor Giuliani, like many Labour politicians, believes that criminals are more influenced by the confidence that they will never be caught, not the retribution that they might theoretically suffer. Hence, the stress in New York has been upon convincing urban felons that they will be remorselessly pursued whatever the offence.

Working separately, each philosophy has had substantial success. In the inner cities of California, especially downtown Los Angeles, the police do not have the New York option. They have already allowed the growth of no-go areas where the only zero tolerance is that displayed by well-armed gangs towards the forces of legal authority. In New York, however, the perilous financial standing of the city, which has teetered on the edge of bankruptcy for two decades, precludes the expensive option of long sentences and many more jails.

The two options need not, however, be mutually exclusive. Britain could pursue both imported blueprints at the same time. Unlike the American pioneers, British cities do not suffer from either the no-go or no-cash dilemmas. Politicians from both parties have been interested in both programmes. So far the Conservatives have been more charmed by the California option while Labour has found more promise in New York. The most imaginative strategy would adopt both the macro-strategy of the West Coast with the micro-approach of the East. Whoever successfully blended the two concepts would deserve to capture the prized title of "the law and order party" and the advantage at the ballot box. Rather more relevantly, they might also make a substantial impact on the level of crime.

TIME FOR PAKISTAN

Delaying elections may be better than it appears

Pakistan's military, always a power behind the scenes, has been invited to step to the front of the political stage at a time of turmoil exceptional even by Pakistan's dismal standards. The heads of the armed services will occupy four of the ten seats on a new Council for Defence and National Security. President Farooq Leghari maintains that its role will be limited to giving "mature advice". Few Pakistanis will believe him.

Whether or not the council actually "advises" the President, when it meets for the first time today, to declare a state of emergency and postpone the parliamentary elections set for February 3, the very act of creating such a body further qualifies Pakistan's frayed claims to be a parliamentary democracy.

Such symbolism matters even in terms of real power. The council could be said merely to make more transparent the power-sharing truce of President, Prime Minister and military chief of staff which is a fact of Pakistan's political life. When he dismissed Benazir Bhutto and her Government last November, President Leghari was acting well within his constitutional rights. He could also claim to be acting in the country's best interests: the nation's finances were in a terrible state and Miss Bhutto was ever resistant to his demands for a crackdown on the rampant political corruption to which the financial crisis is linked.

His latest move, by contrast, is constitutionally questionable. It could also further destabilise the country if Miss Bhutto, who has underlined her stance that her Pakistan People's Party "will not accept the results of the election if we do not win", cites the threat of renewed military dictatorship to justify a return to the politics of mass protest. When the President promised last November to give Pakistan a new political start, he gave no hint of meaning by the

installation of an army-backed presidential system of government.

Whether that is what emerges in practice will be largely up to the military command; and so far, it has shown discernible reluctance to be sucked into the political vortex. In the disputes within the caretaker Cabinet, which has been deeply divided on whether to postpone the February elections, the army has sided with the anti-postponement lobby. A time-limited delay of the February elections would not necessarily be as damaging to Pakistani democracy as it seems. The two leading contenders have both been dismissed from office on corruption charges; three months was always too short a time for credible choices to emerge from such polluted political machinery.

Time would also allow the interim Government to tighten up its accountability law, intended to disqualify politicians guilty of corruption. It was hastily drafted and has allowed too many big fish to slip through its meshes. In particular, there is need to tighten the new rules designed to bar politicians who have damaged the country's banking system by declining to repay massive personal loans to which nothing but their political influence entitled them.

Most of the technocrats filling the political vacuum are doing a respectable job. They have made deep cuts in the size of government, reduced the scope for political patronage, advanced privatisation and introduced deep banking and tax reforms. They have also cancelled most "development" projects, too many of which aimed to buy votes with profligate public works schemes. The telling exception is the monstrously inflated defence budget. Since this alone is reason enough to doubt the military's commitment to true reform, Mr Leghari has done little to bolster confidence by sweeping the soldiers so publicly into his embrace.

THE BALLOON GOES UP

A salute to the spirit of entrepreneurship and adventure

Almost two decades after man first landed on the Moon, today's adventurers are still trying to circumnavigate the world in a balloon — the mode of transport that pioneered manned flight more than 200 years ago. If the jet stream that yesterday carried Richard Branson and his two intrepid companions aloft across the cloudless Moroccan skies remains as dependable at 30,000ft, the giant Virgin balloon will cross India, the Pacific, America and the Atlantic in about three weeks: our hopes for a safe return to Britain go with it.

Mr Branson's balloon bears only superficial resemblance to the contraptions built by the Montgolfier brothers. The colourful balloon that lifted off from a French provincial marketplace in 1783 was a paper and canvas bag; the air inside was heated by burning straw and wool. It rose 3,000ft and stayed up for ten minutes. Three months later the two pioneers repeated the experiment in Versailles, sending up a sheep, a rooster and a duck as passengers and opening up the age in which the common man could look over the king's palace walls.

The *Virgin Global Challenger* offers no such political symbolism. It weighs over 11 tons and is taller than Nelson's Column. It is filled with helium and guided by navigation and communications equipment packed into a space-age capsule. The risks of this trip,

however, are greater than those of two centuries ago. Balloons are playthings of the elements. Storms and downdrafts can toss and batter them from the skies. Balloons can be pitched into the ocean, crash into mountains or come down in jungles or distant deserts. This balloon can also fly into political turbulence — skirting across wars, straying into closed airspace, or racing into local hostility and suspicion.

Why should Mr Branson risk his life — again — and his fortune on the enterprise? His Virgin empire may reap rich publicity from success; but a disaster for him could spell disaster for his family and employees. It may be said that the balloon is not a uniquely risky vehicle; that the first manned space flights were a fearsome challenge too. But the space missions came at the end of a long and massively financed programme of preparation. Round-the-world solo sailors have been able to draw on thousands of years experience of the world's navies.

This trip is not part of some military training exercise. It is a symbol of private entrepreneurship, amateur sport and personal courage. There is a sort of race too, not a precise modern race but a mildly confusing old-fashioned contest in which a Belgian team in Switzerland and an American in St Louis vie for an immaterial prize. The Montgolfiers would have approved.

Scenario for the bugging of a home

From Mr Harold Pinter

Sir, I write with reference to the Police Bill, now passing through Parliament with no discernible opposition from Her Majesty's Opposition. Since the Bill will legalise "bugging" of private property by the police I take it the following sequence of events is logical.

A householder discovers a police officer bugging his house. He (or she) asks the officer to remove himself and the bug. The officer refuses, arguing that his activity is entirely legal. The householder persists, arguing in turn that what is taking place is an invasion of age-old rights of privacy. The officer cautions the householder. The householder refuses to give way. He is then placed under arrest for obstructing a police officer in the course of his duty.

Would the Home Secretary confirm or deny this scenario?

Yours faithfully,
HAROLD PINTER,
c/o Judy Daish Associates,
2 St Charles Place, W10,
January 6.

Abortion and politics

From the Reverend Timothy Russ

Sir, Dr Geoffrey Seiff, a prospective parliamentary candidate, would like Cardinal Hume to give advice about voting on the whole range of issues, from the National Lottery to crime and punishment (letter, January 6). He thinks this because the Cardinal has spoken against voting for candidates who support abortion.

If the Cardinal were to follow Dr Seiff's advice, the consequence would be to make the Church into a political party and to confuse the public on one point with an apparent omniscience which would in fact be folly.

In the "back to basics" movement it is a step forward to identify a genuine basic, and the right to life is obviously the most basic human right. Should we not, in our openness to shuddle and compromise, be grateful to the Cardinal for clarifying this point, especially as, since we have an unwritten constitution, the welfare of the country depends not only on the good will but on the sound moral sense of its leaders.

Sincerely,
TIMOTHY RUSS,
The Rectory, 23 High Street,
Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire,
January 6.

From the Assistant for Public Affairs to Cardinal Hume

Sir, Dr Seiff says that "the Cardinal cannot be allowed to shy away from telling us where he stands on the secular aspects of the nation's governance".

May I refer him to *The Common Good*, published last October by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, of which Cardinal Hume is president. This document sets out the principles of Catholic social teaching and its application to many key areas of public policy, including the foundational issue of the right to life.

The bishops insist that every public policy should be judged by the effect it has on human dignity and the common good. In saying this they do not seek to tell people who to vote for, but rather to make more explicit the inescapable moral dimension of all political activity, including voting.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES WOOKEY,
Assistant for Public Affairs
to Cardinal Hume,
Archbishop's House, Westminster.

Private healthcare

From Dr Stuart Sanders

Sir, I practise as a private family doctor and I have noticed recently a tendency for private patients to be discharged from hospital as quickly as possible — in some cases so prematurely as not only to cause the patients discomfort but also, and more importantly, to put them at risk should they develop post-operative complications.

This concept has been introduced by several of the United Kingdom healthcare insurers in order to contain treatment costs. The consultant in charge of the case is obliged to follow this practice to avoid criticism by the healthcare insurer; should he not comply, he would be asked to submit a long and tedious report to the insurer explaining why the patient should stay in hospital longer than prescribed by the insurer.

I ask if this healthcare trend is in the interest of the patient or has it been created with the insurers' commercial considerations in mind?

Yours faithfully,
STUART SANDERS,
22 Harlow House,
20 Harley Street, W1.

Predictable Parris

From Mrs Nicholas Banks

Sir, Matthew Parris's predictable and inevitable articles (letter, January 2) — on his holidays or anything else — are the reason I predictably and inevitably buy *The Times*.

Yours faithfully,
SHERI BANKS,
Ty Uchaf, Llan, Cilcain,
Mold, Flintshire, North Wales,
January 2.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

New 'onslaught' on hereditary peers

From the Earl of Dudley

Sir, I personally hope that Mr Jack Straw's stir against the hereditary peerage in the House of Lords (report, December 31) will be as unsuccessful as that of his historic namesake, one of the leaders of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381.

Labour's denunciation of individual peers is reminiscent of the posters pasted on Chinese walls by Chairman Mao's Red Guard; and as deplorable. My concern for the constitutional role of the hereditary peerage will remain for debate in the Lords, should the occasion unhappily arise.

Yours faithfully,
DUDLEY,
Vent House,
Pittborough, North Devon,
January 1.

From Mr Richard A. Edwards

Sir, To judge from the quality of debate to date, the composition of the Upper House, its powers and its relation to the Commons are important matters that clearly cannot be settled by the normal political process. As with the previous attempt to reform the Lords in 1968, a cross-party consensus is needed.

An effective way of arriving at such a consensus would be a special select committee drawn from members of both Houses. Such a committee might receive submissions from experts outside Parliament, investigate the various proposals for reform and, of

course, make recommendations on how the Lords should be reformed.

This, surely, would be a more profitable manner in which to pursue this important issue.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD A. EDWARDS,
60 Queen's Road, Devizes, Wiltshire.

From the Earl of Darnley

Sir, I was interested to read about my family history in your report on the latest attack on the House of Lords by the Labour Party. For the record the facts are these.

My grandfather was not the first Earl and even if he was he could hardly have been raised to the peerage in 1640. The family title dates back to 1725 in the peerage of Ireland, which does not entitle the holder to sit in the House of Lords, and whatever lands the family used to own in Ireland came into the family through marriage in the mid-18th century.

My grandfather was better known as The Hon. Ivor Bligh, captain of the England cricket team responsible for the original "Ashes". He later was elected as a Representative Peer for Ireland and sat as such in the House of Lords. I hope you will agree that the inclusion of my name in this political onslaught is somewhat misplaced.

Yours faithfully,
DARNLEY,
Netherwood Manor,
Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire,
January 1.

Oxbridge entry

From Mr Stephen Monsell

Sir, Your report, "Oxbridge alumni hope gifts will secure places for children" (January 2), may have given the impression that this college was considering giving serious weight to admissions decisions to a family link to the college.

The informal minute from which you quoted in fact recorded the discussion and decisive rejection of a suggestion that interviewers should be told of a candidate's family connection when it is known to our development office. We would like our admissions decisions to be completely blind to any such connection.

In practice we often are not blind: a candidate mentions a family link, or we remember their father or sister as a student. We surely cannot disprove of a candidate's wish to maintain a family tradition as one motive for their choice of college — that is the "existing and informal bias" I acknowledged; it is more sentimental than financial. But, as the minute

went on to say, we reaffirmed our intention to ensure that any such sympathies (positive or negative) influence our decisions "only when all other things are equal".

In practice, other things are rarely equal. And only a tiny fraction of our applicants have known family links. Adequate statistics are not available, but I believe we disappoint similar proportions of applicants with and without family links, albeit with occasional extra feelings of regret in the former case.

I am no longer in charge of science admissions, but I am sure our present admissions tutors will continue to ensure that pressures and possible biases to offer places on any basis other than academic and personal qualities relevant to performance at university are acknowledged and discussed among us — and their impact thereby minimised.

Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN MONSELL,
(Science Admissions Tutor, 1992-96),
Pembroke College, Cambridge,
January 4.

Official Solicitor's role

From Mr Francis Bennion

Sir, There is a misconception at the root of the recent controversy over the proposed film of Frederick West's life (letters, January 4). It is assumed that in relation to his rights over the West archive, the Official Solicitor is obliged under the present law covering his duties (report, January 2) to maximise profits for the beneficiaries in the same way as would apply to an ordinary trustee. In fact this is not so.

The full title of this officer, as successor to the former Official Solicitor of the Court of Chancery, is "Official Solicitor to the Supreme Court of Judicature". He is an officer of that court and is by law obliged to exhibit the loftiest standards of behaviour in the performance of his office.

This was laid down by Lord Bridge of Harwich in *R v Tower Hamlets London Borough Council, ex parte Chemik Developments Ltd* [1988] AC 858 at 876-877. Lord Bridge said that the court would only allow its officers to act in a "high-principled" way, adding that even where an ordinary person might lawfully act in a "shabby" way, this would not be permitted in an officer of the court.

It seems clear to me that the Official Solicitor is entitled, indeed bound, to

exercise his duties in the way a high-minded private person would act where he had a choice as to the way he was to deploy his rights of property.

Yours faithfully,
FRANCIS BENNION,
5 Old Nursery View,
Kennington, Oxford,
January 4.

From Mr W. T. N. Chidgey

Sir, Mr G. L. Leigh (letter, January 4) was clearly fortunate in his beneficiaries when a trustee.

I was employed in a bank's trustee department and I recall a case many years ago when we accepted an offer on a house subject to contract. Before contract we received a higher offer but felt that we were morally committed to the previous acceptance. The beneficiary sued and the court held that a trustee had no moral obligation to a third party that could override the legal obligation to maximise the benefit to his trust. We had to pay.

The Official Solicitor was surely in the same position.

Yours faithfully,
W. T. N. CHIDGEY,
White Rose House,
31a Deanfield Avenue,
Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire,
January 4.

Labour and education

From the Headmaster of The King's School, Chester

Sir, In a radio interview last Sunday, Mr David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, welcomed the intention of Mr and Mrs Blair to send their second son to a grant-maintained school. He did so partly on the ground that it is good for parents to have the opportunity to send brothers and sisters to the same school (see also reports, January 7).

This independent school, doubtless like a number of others, has boys whose younger brothers would very much like to join them here in due course. They will only be able to do so if, like their older brothers, they can benefit from the Government's assisted places scheme.

Mr Blunkett has now confirmed that no new assisted places will be awarded if Labour wins the next election (report, January 7). Can he not at least guarantee that some will continue, so as to ensure that younger brothers and sisters, and their parents, can have the freedom enjoyed by the Blair family to choose the school of their wishes and ambitions.

Yours faithfully,
A. R. D. WICKSON,
Headmaster,
The King's School, Chester,
January 7.

From the Shadow Secretary of State for Education and Employment

Sir, Contrary to the suggestion in your report ("Blunkett would scrap results of first tests", January 2), Labour has made no decision on the future of national performance tables for primary schools. We will not do so until we are in a position to judge the efficiency and usefulness to parents of the exercise, to be published on March 1.

If at that stage we judged the national tables not to be an efficient way of providing parents with information on local primary schools, we would ensure that details of test results in local schools were published by local education authorities — and would thus be available to parents. We are committed to extending the information published by including an assessment of how well pupils in a school are performing compared to their baseline assessment on entry to primary school.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID BLUNKETT,
House of Commons,
January 2.

Letters for publication should carry contact telephone numbers. We regret that we cannot accept letters by telephone but they may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5046.

Earliest record of America's name

From Dr Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, FSA

Sir, The earliest evidence about the derivation of the name "America" (Sir James Craig's letter, January 4) was recorded by the man who, as far as we know, bestowed it: Martin Waldseemüller, cosmographer of the school of Saint-Dié in Lorraine. In a work of 1507, he referred to "the fourth part of the world, which, because Americus [Amerigo Vesputci] found it, may be called Amerige, that is, Land of Americus, or America". It was typical of the learned games then played at Saint-Dié that the suffix "-ge" should be used for the Greek *genos* or "earth".

Alluding to writings by Vesputci appended to his work, Waldseemüller further explained: "The fourth part has been found by Americus Vesputius, as will be heard in what follows; I do not see why anyone could properly disallow that it be called Amerige, that is, Land of Americus, or America, after Americus, the discoverer, a man of sagacious spirit." The feminine ending was to be preferred "since", Waldseemüller continued, "the names of both Europe and Asia have been allotted after women".

Vesputci's claim to the discovery was unjustified; but all 16th-century works known to me which discuss the origin of the name of America endorse Waldseemüller's derivation. The similarity with the name of the Bristolian mentioned in Sir James's letter, Richard Ameryk, who died in 1504, is an amusing but otherwise unremarkable coincidence and there is no evidence to support the presumption that the hemisphere was named in his honour.

Nor can Ameryk be said to have been an investor in Cabot's enterprise, though he was one of the customs officials responsible for funds from which Cabot's crown pension was paid.

Yours faithfully,
FELIPE FERNANDEZ-ARMESTO,
Hakluyt Society,
c/o Map Library, The British Library,
Great Russell Street, WC1,
January 4.

New year resolution

From Mr Bill Kearns

Sir, There may have been many truths in the articles you have published over the past year, but none more than William Rees-Mogg reporting the comments of the Archbishop of Canterbury ("Defenders of the faith", December 30). Dr Carey was reported as saying:

When I actually meet politicians, the Government, the Royal Family, members of the House of Lords and so on, they are remarkably ordinary people. When you get close to them they are the same as my aunt Ethel.

Perhaps in the new year we will all treat them as such. With affection, equality and a lot less deference.

Yours,

BILL KEARNS,
11 Court Royal Mews,
Northlands Road,
Southampton, Hampshire,
December 30.

Christmas rations

From Dr Richard Hardwick

Sir, When I was a junior doctor in the 1950s we always spent some of Christmas Day on the wards, carving turkey, serving port (depending on rank) followed by our own Christmas fare.

My son, now a registrar, drew the short straw and was part of a very reduced staff on 24-hour duty both for the Christmas and new year holidays. It was deemed too expensive to maintain canteen staff (paid double) to feed young doctors (not paid double) and sandwiches were left out.

Even the homeless were offered a hot meal on Christmas Day. Surely good medicine comes more easily from happy doctors.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD HARDWICK,
Passfield Corner,
Passfield, Liphook, Hampshire.

Tip for the icebound

From Mrs Marjorie Robertson Smith

Sir, I should like to add to Dr Sturtford's plea for people to wrap up warmly (Medical Briefing, December 31). Woollen cuffs can be knitted or cut from old socks or jerseys and worn on the wrists next to the skin. I wear cuffs all the time in the winter and never suffer from cold hands.

Yours sincerely,
M. ROBERTSON SMITH,
1 Bishop's Wood, Cuddesdon, Oxford.

Pie in the sky?

From Dr David Cowen

Sir, In yesterday's report on Richard Branson's global balloon trip you described the balloon as "the size of the Empire State Building". I viewed this with some scepticism. Today you depict it as being somewhat higher than Nelson's Column. This I find more believable.

The British have always tended to exaggeration, and the expedition is certainly huge. I wish the team every success.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID COWEN,
Flat 2, 14 Granville Road,
Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne,
January 7.

Ignore the horror stories. With firm house rules and carefully chosen tenants, says Amanda Foreman, letting makes sound sense

Never let your friend be your lodger

Lodgers have a bad image in popular culture. On screen, their roles tend to occupy a limited range between social psychopaths and dangerous psychopaths. Like successful career women (*Fatal Attraction*), nannies (*The Hand that Rocks the Cradle*) and television repair men (*The Cable Guy*), Hollywood generally regards such people as a threat to the American household.

But don't believe the hype. I have been letting my two spare bedrooms since 1991 and the experience has been nothing but lucrative.

The Government helps me to maintain my positive attitude by offering generous tax incentives to landlords. Under the rent-a-room scheme, from next April up to £4,250 a year is tax-free — which works out at about £81 a week. Outside London, where the average rent is £55 a week, some landlords may pay no tax at all. Rents are much higher in the capital, averaging £90 to £100 a week, which means that landlords still have to pay tax on only part of the profits.

Alternatively, if you have more than one lodger, as I do, it can be advantageous to ignore the scheme and instead claim tax relief against expenses. I include everything in my list of deductions, from washing-up liquid to light bulbs.

The large amount of money involved is the reason I do not let friends. Lodgers are essentially

cash cows, to be handled firmly yet pleasantly with a view to maximising profits. You cannot turn your friends into a business and expect to maintain the same relationship. When lodgers a) default on the rent, b) break the washing machine, or c) hog the telephone all night, the rules for dealing with the situation are simple. In the case of a) give them a month's notice, b) deduct the cost from their deposit, and c) tell them to get off the telephone. But you cannot throw your friend on to the street when she has lost her job, even if it means her living with you rent-free for the next nine months.

My prejudice against letting to friends is confirmed by some of the nightmare stories I have heard from people who do. The biggest problem is the fact that proximity often breeds jealousy. It is not unusual for one flatmate to feel that the other is "taking over" his or her friends, particularly as people tend to regard flatmates who are friends as a double act.

Edward Vaisy, a 29-year-old political lobbyist, shares a flat with his best friend, which he enjoys, except that "Mutual friends ring up and feel obliged to make conversation with you for five minutes, even though they actually want to talk to the other person.



Amanda Foreman: "The Government offers tax incentives to landlords — £81 a week from April"

Also annoying is the weekly competition to see who gets asked out more. Then there's the issue of how you socialise at home without your flatmate automatically joining in. Ironically, the distance inherent

in the landlord-lodger relationship guarantees everyone a far greater sense of privacy. We all do our own thing in my house; occasionally, we watch television together or share a takeaway, but our lives are

separate. The fact that everyone's background is different brings unexpected benefits, too. I had a travel agent once who was good for cheap flights, a champagne salesman (useful for parties), a bank

manager (sound pension advice) and a professional sailor who enjoyed DIY.

Last year my house embodied a successful version of the Northern Ireland peace talks. There was Claire the banker, a Roman Catholic from Cork, Robert the engineer, a Protestant from Belfast, and myself, an Anglo-American, all living in civilised harmony — we just never mentioned the word unification.

After five years in the business, I have learnt that the rules are few but indispensable:

● The room must be presentable, include a drawer and cupboard space and have a double bed — no one will accept a single bed nowadays.

● Do not take someone on the first interview — always meet them a second time before deciding.

● Ask direct questions about their previous house (there may be good reasons why this person is looking for a new place).

● Be explicit about the house rules at the first meeting, ie, this is a non-smoking house, you must write down all telephone messages, you may not give parties.

● Do not allow the new lodger to move in without writing you a cheque for the first month's rent and a month's deposit.

● Have the rent paid by standing order and agree on a six-month contract, with a let-out clause on both sides of a month's notice.

Using an agency dulls the pain of looking. Probably the best in London are Flatmates, which has been around for 25 years, and The Flatshare Directory, which started last year.

Flatmates, run by Molly Berwick, takes a psychological approach and insists on interviewing all its clients, both tenants and landlords. It acts almost like a dating agency and tries to put people together who will become friends. The Flatshare Directory places its emphasis on the quality of the property. James Baker personally inspects every flat or house, but he does not meet potential tenants. "Most of them are too busy to come down to the office during working hours," he explains.

Both agencies charge a flat fee of a week-and-a-half's rent, although The Flatshare Directory only levies this charge against tenants, on the basis that without the landlords, the company would not exist.

Of course there is no guarantee that your lodger will not become attracted to Satanism. Maybe one day I will end up like Meg Ryan in *Pacific Heights* and have to shoot my lodger dead. But in the meantime, I'm quite happy to take the money and run.



A view of Bocket Hall across the golf course from the estate's Paine Bridge: CCA, the new owners, plan a second 18-hole golf course plus a health spa with gymnasium and pool

Brocket Hall tees off to a new revival

As the former lord of the manor sits in jail, Rachel Kelly looks at the grandiose plans for an historic stately home

The three children of Lord Bocket are likely to inherit a very different home from that enjoyed by their parents. The jailed peer's heirs, Alexander, 12, William, five, and Anthony, eight, will recover Bocket Hall in 60 years' time, thanks to its leasehold sale last month. Meanwhile, the house is to be transformed by its new owner, CCA, a Hong Kong-based developer-manager of 28 private city, golf and country clubs.

CCA has revealed plans to re-launch the house as a hotel and conference centre to rival Cheltenham, near Cookham, Berkshire, former home of the Astor family.

The company plans to build a second 18-hole golf course on the 534-acre estate, outside Welwyn in Hertfordshire, a health spa, with a gymnasium and pool, and to restore extensively the existing Grade I listed house, now used as a conference centre.

Gilders, builders and decorators are already at work. Nigel Massey, a spokesman, talks of "awakening the slumbering beauty that is Bocket" from the neglect that took place during the 18 months of

Mr Massey says: "Large houses such as Bocket were built not only for the family but to provide adequate facilities for meetings where various aspects of the family's business interests could be discussed. It is therefore wholly

appropriate that Bocket Hall should again be used for the purpose for which it was designed." CCA's plans are the latest chapter in the colourful history of the house, built in 1760. Lord Melbourne, Queen Victoria's first

Prime Minister, lived there with Lady Caroline Lamb, his deranged wife. The one-time lover of Byron, she had attracted notoriety by emerging naked from a soup tureen. In 1865 Lord Palmerston, another Prime Minister, was found

dead on the billiard table after an entanglement with a maid.

CCA is owned by its founder, Dieter Klostermann. The company's clubs, mainly in the Asia Pacific region, have 80,000 members and include the London Capital Club and the Vietnam Golf & Country Club. Golf club members will be allowed to transfer their membership to the new club at no extra cost. CCA is considering special concessions for members' access to the main house.

The present Lord Bocket saved the house from disrepair by converting it in 1981 into a profitable "residential meeting place" and golf club, with an international standard 18-hole championship golf course. But his speculation in the classic car market cost him £20 million and left him with big debts. So Lord Bocket planned a £4.5 million insurance fraud that would save him from ruin. In 1991, he broke up and hid the parts of three Ferraris and a Maserati, which he reported stolen and for which he claimed insurance.

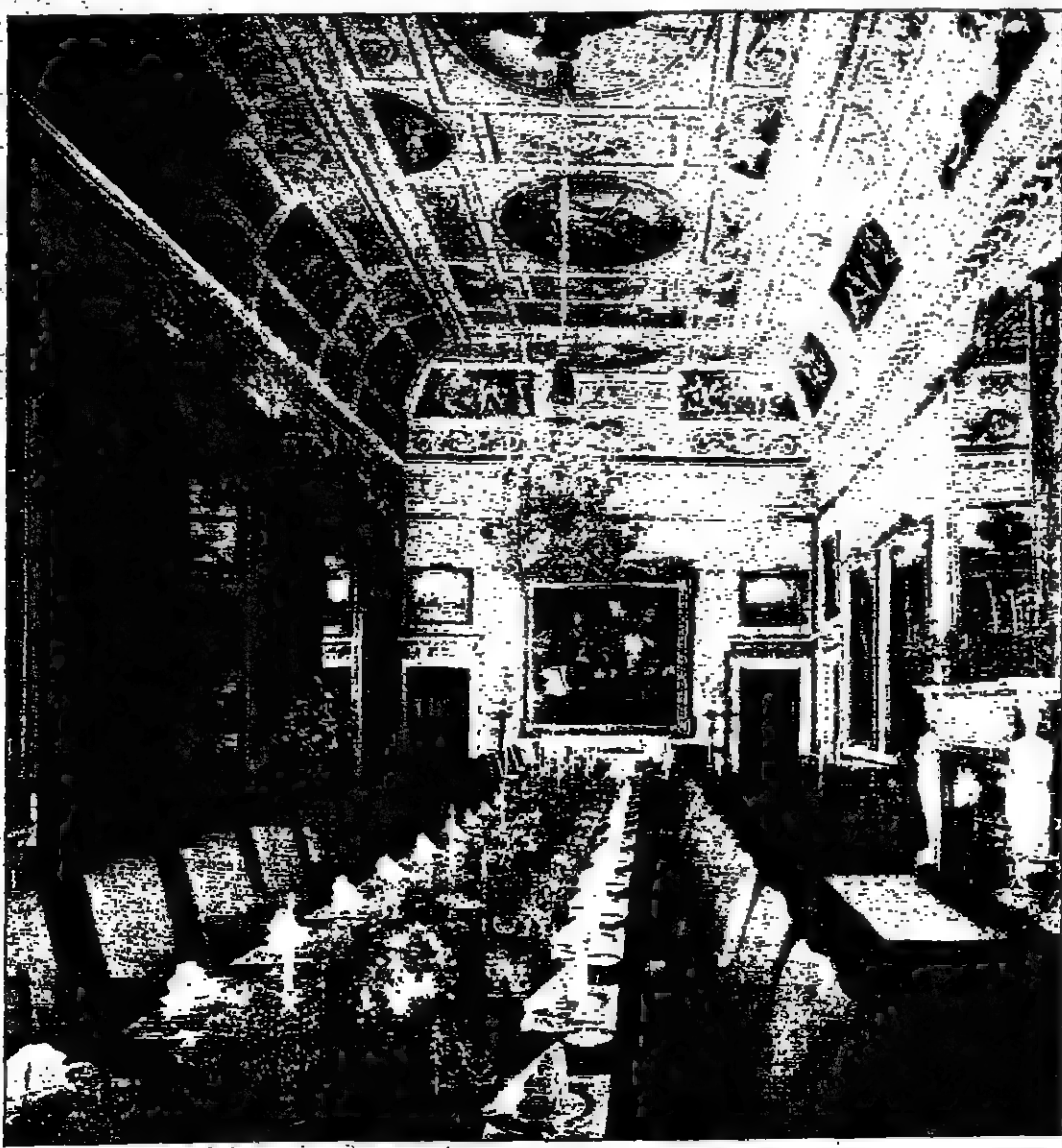
In 1994 Lady Bocket, a former Vogue model, exposed her husband's dealings. She is now living

A spokesman talks of 'awakening the slumbering beauty'

in her homeland of Puerto Rico with their three children. For the past 18 months, the house and golf club were owned and run by Bocket Hall Ltd, the surrounding estate was owned by a family trust. Both parties had to agree to the sale before it could go ahead.

Midland Bank demanded that Bocket Hall be sold to pay off an £18 million debt that had accrued and it went on the market 18 months ago for £15 million for a 125-year lease. Other bidders included the property developer Elliot Bernerd, whose company owns Wentworth Golf Club, and David Sullivan, the publisher of the *Sunday Sport*, but reports of a £30 million offer for the freehold from the Brunel Royal Family were denied. Other potential investors had flatly rejected the idea of spending millions on the property for it to return to the Bocket family in the future.

CCA wants to restore more historic houses and it is looking at other important houses in southern England. None, though, is likely to be as intriguing as Bocket.



The banquet room in which Lady Caroline Lamb had herself served up naked in a soup tureen

The tax breaks that help the new landowner

Amanda Loose reports on the boom in the large country estates market

The market for large country estates and their houses, so long mired in recession, is booming. Estates are selling for well over the asking price, and 40 per cent of estates sold by Knight Frank last year were snapped up even before reaching the open market.

Agents predict further price increases this year, because of the latest round of City bonuses, continuing tax breaks available for new owners, booming land values, and the chance of large European Union subsidies in the form of common agricultural policy (CAP) grants.

The large estates market was sluggish until 1994. Willie Gething of Property Vision, says: "In the early 1990s, Grade II land was selling for about £1,000 an acre. The value of agricultural land has now tripled to £3,000 an acre in some instances."

James Laing, of the land agency Strutt & Parker, says: "Agricultural profits have boomed because of consistently good harvests and high crop yields, coupled with low interest rates and low inflation. Land values in the Home Counties have risen by up to 30 per cent in a year ago because of greater profits to be had from agriculture. These have increased since our exit from the exchange-rate mechanism, as the levels of subsidies have increased after the pound devalued."

Four of Britain's wealthiest landowners received £1 million each in CAP grants last year and 16 others were given between £500,000 and £990,000, according to government figures released last week.

More than 1,000 farmers received £100,000 and a further 1,234 subsidies of between £100,000 and £1 million. The subsidies include set-aside grants which give farmers £338 for each hectare of land left fallow.

Tax breaks are an incentive. Businesses can postpone their tax liability on the sale of their company by claiming reinvestment tax relief if they reinvest the proceeds, Mr Laing says. "In addition, if you farm land yourself for two years before you die, you are eligible for 100 per cent inheritance-tax relief," he says. "Many buyers fear that such tax reliefs could change if Labour comes to power, so they are taking advantage of them while they can."

Strutt & Parker estimates that

building-land prices also increased by more than 10 per cent last year, which has generated an increase in buyers looking for development land. Mr Laing adds: "As the housing market recovers, more landowners are selling small corners of their estates as building land. If someone reinvests the profits made from a trading asset in land within three years, then they qualify for rollover tax relief, which postpones paying capital gains tax."

Many of the new buyers last year were entrepreneurs whose companies had merged or been acquired, according to Mr Gething. More than 40 per cent of purchases were made by City or business buyers, says James Crawford from Knight Frank, while 39 per cent of estates went to overseas buyers, attracted by low land premiums.

Most estates are going for above the asking price, Mr Crawford says. Premiums of up to 20 per cent above guide prices were achieved last year, and Justin Marking, of Savills, estimates that people have paid premiums of up to 40 per cent.

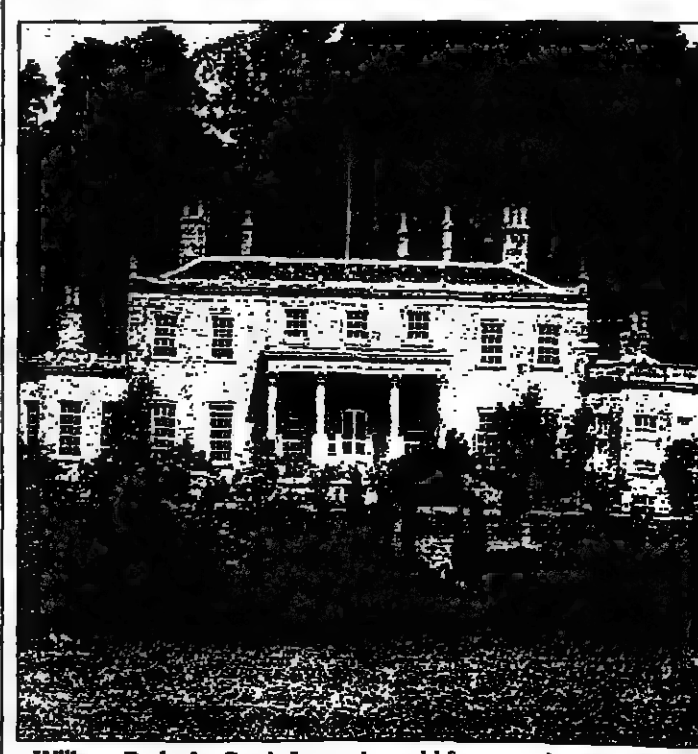
Large estate and country house sales in 1996 were fast and furious. One of the fastest-selling estates of the year was West Ashling House, near Chichester, West Sussex. The former home of Viscount Portal, designed by Robert Lutyens (son of Sir Edwin), was sold in just four days by Humberts for well above the £1 million guide price.

Wilbury Park, the Grade I listed Palladian mansion near Salisbury in Wiltshire, was bought for more than £8 million, £3 million over its guide price, by Miranda Countess of Iveagh, of the Guinness family.

One of the biggest private sales of the year was Foxcote Estate in Ilminster, Warwickshire. The 900-acre estate, with its Georgian house, went for about £8 million.

The Hurdott Estate, between Salisbury and Shaftesbury, owned by the property developer John Beckwith, was one of the year's family stories. It went for more than £10 million in a private sale — £2.5 million above the traditional valuation.

Current sales include that of the 1,435-acre Beckering Park Estate, near Flitwick, Bedfordshire, by Savills, with a guide price of £4.25 million.



Wilbury Park: the Grade I mansion sold for more than £8 million

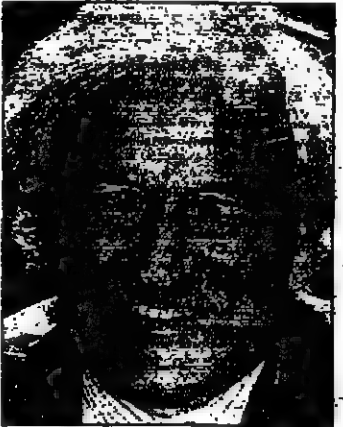
THE LISTENER

Incredible shrinking workspace

THIS new year has brought claustrophobia to the offices of *The Express*, where Lords Hollick and Stevens of Ludgate soldier on in their efforts to turn round their ailing seven-day paper. The latest money-saving wheeze at the Blackfriars HQ is to prove that two floors of editorial staff can be made to squeeze into one.

This week, for instance, journalists inhabiting level three in the building are stuffing their belongings into bin bags and tramping upstairs to join their colleagues on level four. Their old home can then be leased out, earning the company about £1 million a year.

It is undeniable that the blood-letting at the paper has left vacant desks around the place, but staff claim their new working environment will be like a cramped Victorian schoolhouse. "And we intend to behave accordingly," says one poor chap as he prepares to vacate his window seat for a draughty corridor next to the door.



Lynam: bid for a media empire

Radio Lynam

GIVEN that university students are naming bars and buildings after him, it should come as no surprise that Des Lynam, the BBC sports presenter, is bidding to create his own media empire. Lynam, who renewed his BBC contract for a reported £500,000 last year, has teamed up with friends in his home town of Brighton to bid for a local radio licence in East Sussex. The new venture, Brighton FM, plans to broadcast news, entertainment

and sport. It will no doubt be scrupulously fair in reporting the fortunes of Lynam's own team, Brighton and Hove Albion, which is rooted at the bottom of the Nationwide League's third division. It is not clear whether Lynam's new role will lead to a conflict of interest. If successful, Brighton FM will be a rival to the BBC's own Southern Counties Radio.

Auntie's minder

AFTER much head-scratching, the BBC has finally found a replacement for Stephen Whittle (now director of the Broadcasting Standards Council) as chief minder, or what the BBC more coyly refers to as "chief adviser editorial policy".

Susan Spindler, former deputy head of science and features at the Beeb and conceiver of the hugely successful *Animal Hospital* television series, has been sharpening her red pencil over the holidays and will take on the job this week.

Given the debate about taste and decency on television, the post is a hot potato at the moment. But Spindler, considered a "good egg" by colleagues, is expected to be a safe pair of hands. Since Whittle's departure last spring, the post had been held on an interim basis by James Boyle until he was appointed controller of Radio 4 last year.

UNDETERRED by the decision of Bruce Gynell, Yorkshire Tynes Television boss, to ban its Hollywood Lovers series from his ITV region, September Films is already working on its next series. After Hollywood Women (described by one regulator as "distressingly popular"), Hollywood Kids, Hollywood Men and Hollywood Pets, you might think there was nothing left, but September Films has only just started. Prepare for Hollywood Doctors and Nurses, Hollywood Homes and Gardens and Hollywood Cops.

Labour's lobby

MAKING a film about lobbying was never going to be easy. Michael Cockerell, the journalist behind the BBC's programme *A Word in the Right Ear*, Cockerell had a surfeit of lobbyists, particularly from the tobacco and water industries. But the hardest job was getting anyone from the Labour Party to mention the "L word" on camera. His film crew was finally given permission to film Robin Cook, Shadow Foreign Secretary, talking to lobbyists. But Mr Cook sent them away, saying he knew nothing of the arrangement.

ECTABLE DOZEN



Titillation time: page three girls have returned to *The Mirror*

Maggie Brown on the anatomy of a desperate relaunch

Has The Mirror finally cracked?

THE desperate quest for more readers has led Britain's only Labour-supporting tabloid into a strange relaunch this week. It looks as if millennium fever may have gone to its editorial head.

In a bid to woo back the under-45s who have been deserting in droves, the *Daily Mirror* has emptied its front page of words and redesigned it as a poster, New York tabloid-style.

Piers Morgan, the paper's young (31) and much-criticised Editor, said: "There will rarely be text on page one in future. We will go for impact and image."

Being economical with words starts with the new masthead, which a myriad of critics gleefully pounced upon as a stylistic cross between *The People* and a freshest. Out has gone the word *Daily* in favour of a simple *The Mirror*. The front-page promise of "honesty, quality, excellence" which replaced the earlier "forward with the people" has also been ditched. *The Mirror* now styles itself "the paper for the new millennium".

It has been reconstituted after months of intensive market research and the use of "focus groups" in which selected readers were canvassed in fine detail about what they wanted to see in *The Mirror*. Particular attention was paid to the views of younger readers. The paper is trying to tread a fine line between keeping its traditional working-class readers and encouraging their children and grandchildren to sample the paper.

In an admission which had former editors snorting with disapproval — they believe successful newspapers develop instinctively — Mr Morgan said he had relied heavily on the research findings.

What the research showed was that some readers, especially younger ones, found the *Mirror* "slightly boring". According to Mr Morgan, they wanted "something more vibrant, aggressive, attitudinal".

They also appreciated regional news and weather, so the paper has been regionalised into seven areas and each edition carries a digest of regional snippets on page two. This is diametrically opposed to the practice of successful editors such as Stuart Higgins, who think that national papers should be national reads.

Inside, in contrast to the front page, there are a lot more words than before (although perhaps not a higher story count), yet scant sign of any concept of what a powerful, Blair-supporting tabloid ought to be.

This upset Richard Scott, the last campaigning Editor of the *Daily Mirror*, ousted by David Montgomery in 1992. "If there is a Labour government at last, it has to have a critical friend with intellect and nous. That should be the role of the paper," he said.

The story of Jerry Hayes, a gift to an anti-Tory paper, was relegated to pages eight and nine. "That flabbergasted me," said Stuart Higgins, the Editor of *The Sun*, who put the story on his front page.

Tucked away in a lengthy letter from the Editor in Monday's *Mirror*, below news of a "sizzling new music column" called Mad For It, came the eventual promise: "We hold dear our traditional values of campaigning journalism, fighting injustice wherever it may be." But directly opposite, the page three pin-up was back.

The *Mirror* package has been fattened up with extra pages for television, puzzles and a daily women's section. And there is more news at longer lengths — the paper will contain, on average, an extra eight pages a day. On Monday it had 66 main editorial pages compared with *The Sun*'s 52.

Mr Morgan, who made his name through showbusiness reporting, has bowed to criticism that the *Mirror* had become too vacuous. Every Monday there will now be a for-and-against debate on a key issue. Britain needs a monarchy. Foreign news is also being restored.

Miriam Stoppard, confirmed on Monday as the late Marjorie Proops's successor, will provide true-life casebooks (picture stories) as part of a daily dose of agony, but will not point out that she would be taking a more uncompromising stand on women's rights than her predecessor.

Mr Morgan says that the paper is deliberately pitching for modern, liberated women (despite page three), to distinguish itself from the "misogynist" *Sun* and "traditionalist" *Daily Mail*. This approach is personified by Mandy Capp, a new column running juxtaposed with the trademark Andy Capp.

Ms Stoppard described feelings of "buzz, bonding and excitement" among her new colleagues before the relaunch. They certainly need some good news: *The Mirror* is performing badly. Average sales in the six months to November 1996 (the most recent figures) are down by 5.6 per cent. Most worryingly, the number of readers aged 45 and under has fallen by 15.9 per cent. The average age of *The Mirror*'s readers is 46, compared with *The Sun*'s 42. Its market share is constantly being eroded just when its political legacy should be winning sales. The humiliation of being overtaken by the *Daily Mail* may not be far away.

What do the critics say? Phil Walker, the Editor of *The Star*, was terse: "It's beyond comment." Bill Hagerty, a former deputy editor of the *Mirror*, said: "I was expecting something more glossy. Monty [David Montgomery] so hated the old *Mirror*, he threw out the baby and was left with the bathwater. There is nothing left. When I see their list of writers, I weep."

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 8 1997

Microsoft cracks international software piracy ring

By FRASER NELSON
MICROSOFT, the world's largest software company, has uncovered what it claims is the largest ring of smuggled computer programs ever to come to light, after investigating two British software distributors.

Q&M Technology, a computer company based in Surrey, and Multimicro Distribution, a software company based in Essex, had been named as part of the unauthorised software network which encompasses the US, Canada and the Bahamas. Microsoft says it has so far uncovered more than £100,000 worth of unauthorised software from the supply chain, and expects to seize more as the network unravels.

The supply chain was first uncovered by a complaint from a customer, who had bought a copy of Microsoft Office from Q&M Software. Microsoft took issue with the company, which it found to be storing £20,000 worth of "grey software" — bought at a reduced

educational price in the US, then repackaged as new for the full-price retail market in the UK. It then traced the software to Multimicro Distribution, where it found more consignments of the grey software. At the same time, Customs officers at Heathrow found a consignment of suspicious software bound for Multimicro, and passed it to Microsoft. It too was identified as grey software from the US. Two further consignments were seized at Heathrow, with a total value of £77,000. Microsoft says that the software was repackaged en route, stripped of its educational badges and dressed to resemble high street packaging complete with the company's logo laser-printed on a security sticker.

Q&M has agreed to surrender its holdings of the grey software, and pay undisclosed damages to Microsoft. Multimicro has agreed to pass over its stock, but it is still in negotiations with the company. Neither company was available for comment. Sharon Baylay, marketing director of Microsoft's UK software theft office, said: "This is by far the largest illegal software scheme we have encountered. It shows that software theft is a global issue, and underlines our commitment to combating it."

The discovery comes as Microsoft resigned from last Britain's domestic alliance against software theft. It said it regarded the bulk of software theft as coming through international channels, and it was looking to refocus its energies on the global software smuggling market. Mark Roberts, Microsoft's software theft manager, said: "We see that our ability to succeed in this fight against software theft depends on being able to work with international agencies who can offer a global enforcement strategy."

Treasury forecasts may go out to contract

By JANET RUSSELL, ECONOMICS EDITOR
THE Treasury is to look into whether its key role as economic forecaster should be privatised but any decision will not be made until after the election.

In a move that a leading Civil Service trade union immediately described as bizarre and promised to oppose, the Treasury said that it will appoint a consultant by the end of this month to study whether it is feasible to contract out forecasting.

This study is expected to take three months and would not be completed until early May. If it was decided the exercise had potential, the Treasury would ask for bids to carry out the work.

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, had asked for economic forecasting to be subject to market test procedures by late 1996. Treasury officials admitted yesterday that the original timetable for this exercise had slipped and that any decision would have to be taken by the next Government.

Martin Weale, director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research and a member of the Chancellor's independent forecasting panel, said: "In some sense, the Treasury is ducking the decision but, given the proximity of the election, one could regard it as good manners that it has not made any irreversible decision."

Mr Weale, whose institute has had a far superior forecasting record to the Treasury's over the past two years, said it would almost definitely bid for the work if forecasting were to be contracted out. He did not oppose the idea in principle. Under a Labour government, the independent forecasting panel could be turned into an American-style Council of Economic Advisers and the forecasting now done by the Treasury could be taken over by this council.

He also suggested that passing control of the economic forecast to an outside body might put an end to suspicions that the Treasury's forecast is tainted by political bias. Mr Weale cited Mr Clarke's November 1995 Budget forecast of 3 per cent growth. "We had the impression at the time that the Treasury didn't even believe the forecast and that the Treasury's forecast was designed to fit what the Chancellor wanted."

However, there was vehement criticism of the proposal yesterday from The Association of First Division Civil Servants. Jonathan Baume, F&A general secretary designate, said: "In effect, the Government is saying that the heart of the Treasury's work could be done by the private sector. Economic forecasting and monitoring is part of the core business of the Government and the idea that it could be done by unaccountable private firms is bizarre."

He said: "The Government should consider very seriously the implications of handing over such sensitive work to firms or organisations who are not bound by Civil Service rules on confidentiality and political neutrality."

The Treasury said that confidentiality is one of the issues that would be examined. It stressed that, if the consultant were to decide that contracting out were feasible, the current in-house Treasury team of 45 people would put forward a bid. The Treasury would provide the money to employ an external adviser to give the in-house team the necessary management expertise to craft a coherent bid.

The functions that will be looked at for potential privatisation include the central forecast of the macro-economy, the forecasting and monitoring of the public finances and all the work used to make the necessary economic assumptions for planning public spending.

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Pennington, page 27

Pennington, page 27

Former Barings chief challenges SFA ruling

By ROBERT MILLER, BANKING CORRESPONDENT
RON BAKER, the former Barings executive cleared last year on four out of five disciplinary charges brought against him by a City watchdog, yesterday lodged a notice of appeal against the one charge on which he was found guilty.

The Securities and Futures Authority, the regulator for brokers and futures dealers, confirmed last night that Mr Baker is to appeal against his public reprimand and an order to pay £7,500 towards costs. A three-man independent appeals tribunal will now hear Mr Baker's case although the SFA will not appeal against any of the original tribunal's findings.

The SFA had proposed that Mr Baker, who joined the merchant bank in 1992, and Mary Walz, another senior Barings executive, be banned from holding a senior position in the City for up to three years and pay some £10,000 towards the regulator's costs.

The SFA charges were brought in relation to their supervision of Nick Leeson, the rogue trader whose fraudulent dealings on the Far East money markets caused Barings to collapse with debts of £830 million almost two years ago. Ms Walz, who tried unsuccessfully to sue Barings for her £500,000 bonus, reached a settlement with the SFA and will not therefore appeal against the similar penalties.

Mr Baker, who is represented by Fox Williams, the law firm, maintains that he was brought in to supervise Leeson just weeks before the merchant bank crashed and had already begun to question some of the trader's deals.

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Pennington, page 27



Aubrey Adams, managing director of Savills, left, with Richard Jewson, chairman

Savills soars to £3m at halfway stage

SAVILLS, the international property consultant, yesterday reported a 64 per cent jump in half-time profits to £3 million and raised the interim dividend to 1p (0.75p, payable on February 18 (Robert Miller writes)).

Lanica's rapid share price rise falters

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM
THE miraculous rise and rise of Lanica Trust, whose shares climbed from £2 to over £20 in just two months, stalled yesterday when Littlewoods denied rumours that it plans to use Lanica as a vehicle for listing its retail business.

The denial sent the narrowly held shares skittering £4 to £16.50. They later recovered in jerky afternoon trading to close at £18.25.

Littlewoods said there had been no talks of a major link with Lanica — run by Andrew Regan, a 31-year-old entrepreneur — but they were discussing a small deal to supply Lanica with goods and infrastructure for a mail order business with which it is involved. The business, Select Catalogues, is due to launch a mail order service for the armed forces.

The rumour-mongers had suggested something far more dramatic: that privately owned Littlewoods, which is in talks with Sears about buying Freemans, wanted to reverse its mail order and high street retailing business into Lanica to gain a stock market listing.

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Firms urged to spell out staff skills in reports

By Philip Bassett
Industrial Editor

BRITISH firms should put details of employees' skills and experience in their company balance sheets, personnel managers say today — claiming that the way people are managed can affect share prices.

Leaders of Britain's personnel managers are to press the Stock Exchange's inquiry into corporate governance, headed by Sir Ronald Hampel, chairman of ICI, to recommend that companies should publish annual statements

showing the link between people management and business objectives. In a report today, the Institute of Personnel and Development (IPD) says that while measuring the value of a company's people management strategies is difficult, it is possible and important.

John Stevens, IPD director of professional policy, says: "Investors make decisions on the health, effectiveness and prospects of companies knowing very little about the people strategies and practices adopted by those companies. This represents a huge gap in their understanding of those businesses." The IPD

says companies should ensure that annual reports include information on employment and skill levels, training, employee involvement, financial participation, job security, employability, promotion and recruitment.

Mr Stevens says: "To be successful, businesses need flexible, motivated and efficient people. It is time the City acknowledged that people are the most important asset and that the way they are managed can have a critical effect on shareholders' dividends."

The IPD's study, *Investors' Views of People Management*, suggests that the financial sector

increasingly appreciates the link between well-managed employees and business success. The report draws on work done with companies such as BT, Kingfisher, GKN, Marks & Spencer, Kleinwort Benson, Unilever, Prudential, RJR, Glaxo Wellcome, BTR, British Airways and MAM.

But the study, carried out by City University, shows in an analysis of the annual reports and accounts of the top 50 FT-SE companies that training and development is mentioned by only 15, while many more — 24 in all — report on environmental issues.

Trust for Maxwell pensioners to close

By Adam Jones

THE Maxwell Pensioners' Trust, set up to support pension funds plundered by Robert Maxwell, is to close.

The trust was created by the Government in 1992 after the theft of about £440 million from several Maxwell company funds was discovered.

It raised £6 million in donations from companies and individuals, including some who had dealt with Robert Maxwell. The money was released, as interest-free loans or as payment for annuities, on a drip-fed basis to affected funds and individuals, ensuring that 32,000 pensioners received their expected payments.

In March 1995, the Maxwell pension trustees agreed a £276 million settlement package from the Mirror Group and other institutions. It is now thought that none of the affected pensioners should lose out in the long term.

After the settlement, the Maxwell Pensioners Unit, set up in tandem with the trust to monitor progress towards a settlement, was disbanded.

Only a handful of staff from the Department of Social Security were employed by the two bodies, working from offices in St James's Square, London.

The trust's chairman is Jane Newell, one of four trustees. She took over from Lord Cuckney, formerly Sir John Cuckney. He resigned to take up an

independent role as mediator before the settlement.

Mrs Newell said: "I'm absolutely delighted that we have reached this point. Four-and-a-half years ago, we could not imagine it being so successful."

Announcing the closure, Peter Lilley, Social Security Secretary, said: "This is a very satisfactory outcome. I wish to pay tribute to all the work of the trustees, which was unpaid, and to thank those who contributed to MPT funds."

Although the trust is viewed as a success, some believe that it enabled government bodies to play down their own regulatory mistakes.

The total raised by the trust — which grew to £7 million with interest — was also regarded as disappointing by some insiders in the Maxwell clean-up. However, one sceptic added: "Even though it was a relatively small amount of money, it was all that was needed to keep the pensions being paid."

Mrs Newell said the amount raised compared favourably with appeals for causes such as the Hillsborough disaster.

The remaining £1.75 million will be paid to Clay and Partners, administrators of the two funds still experiencing financial difficulties. It will officially close at the end of January.



George Mallinckrodt has received an honorary knighthood for outstanding services

President of Schroders honoured

By Robert Miller

THE president of Schroders, the City's most successful independent investment bank, has been awarded an honorary knighthood.

George Mallinckrodt, a German national who joined Schroders in New York in 1954 and was transferred to London in 1960, received his award from the Queen "in recognition of outstanding services rendered over many years to banking and finance in the City of London."

In tandem with Win Bischoff, chairman of Schroders and a fellow German, Mr Mallinckrodt has presided over the transformation of the family owned bank into an international operation with more than 5,000 employees spread over 33 countries. It is also a member of the elite FT-SE 100 club with a market capitalisation of nearly £3 billion.

Mr Mallinckrodt, who grew up in France and Germany and became a director of Schroders in 1977, is also a non-executive director of Siemens and the Foreign Colonial German Investment Trust.

New car sales at seven-year high

SALES of new cars jumped through the two million mark last year to their highest level for seven years, but carmakers and traders said that private buyers remained cautious.

(Christine Buckley writes)

Figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders show a 4.12 per cent

rise in cars bought in 1996, compared with 2,025,450 in 1995. Ernie Thompson, chief executive, said: "The December figures end the year on a positive note with welcome signs of a return of the private buyer apparent in the last three months."

But the number of private

buyers increased only 2.3 per cent in 1996 and as a percentage of fell from 47 per cent in 1995 to 46 per cent last year.

The society said that although the numbers of private buyers had picked up in the last quarter this year could prove a tricky as uncertainty was triggered by the general

election. December's new car sales rose 9.23 per cent, compared with the same month in 1995, while private buyers increased 14 per cent. Last year's commercial vehicle sales were ahead of 1995's by 2.78 per cent to 256,869 although December showed a year-on-year drop of 5.49 per cent.

Eagle Star offers refunds

By Marianne Curphey

EAGLE STAR, the life and general insurance arm of BAT Industries, has launched the first UK pension with a money-back guarantee.

The policy, dismissed as "a gimmick" by Virgin, Eagle Star's rival, pledges to reimburse customers who wish to transfer to another pension provider within two years.

All fees and charges will be refunded and the current market value of the pension transferred to another provider. Customers will not be allowed to take a cash lump sum.

However, Eagle Star expects fewer than 5 per cent of customers to take up the offer. The new, simpler pension product will be available direct by telephone and is part of BAT Industries' drive to increase its share of the financial services market.

BAT may demerge its financial services division and is believed to have discussed selling part of it to Commercial Union, the composite insurer.

Advance of 22% at Heiton

From Eileen McCabe in Dublin

BUOYANCY in the Irish Republic's construction sector fuelled a 22 per cent improvement in interim pre-tax profits to Ir£4.7 million at Heiton Holdings, one of the country's leading builders' suppliers groups.

The company said that earnings per share for the six months to October 31 were up 21 per cent to Ir£4.7p.

Overall group turnover for the period was up 8 per cent to almost Ir£72 million, with the builders' merchant and steel division performing particularly well.

Atlantic Homecare, the group's do-it-yourself division, recorded a 5 per cent increase in turnover.

Operating margins at 6.8 per cent of turnover for the six months were up from 6.3 per cent for the comparable period in 1995.

The company declared a 21 per cent increase in the interim dividend to Ir£1.65p, payable on April 7.

Rival to KKR to unveil \$1bn deal

By Eric Reguly

THE former president of US West International, one of the largest players in the British cable and media industry, launched an investment fund yesterday and is to announce his first deal, worth more than \$1 billion, this month.

Richard Callahan, 55, who ran US West in London until last spring, said the investment will be in the entertainment sector in continental Europe. "It'll be a big one and we have two more in the queue."

The deal will be made by Callahan Associates (CAI), a financial group formed to acquire and develop projects in communications, entertainment and mobile-phone networks around the world.

Mr Callahan said CAI will be like Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, the leveraged buyout firm

that controls Newsquest, the UK newspaper company that bought Westminster Press last year. It will have a core of investors, such as pension funds and securities houses, recruiting others on a deal-by-deal basis. Returns will come from selling or floating companies a few years after the initial investment.

CAI's executives include David Colley, managing director of Videotron, the cable company, who will run CAI's London office, and Arthur Barron, former chairman of Time Warner International.

CAI intends to make several billion dollars of equity investments in the next five years. Mr Callahan said it will evaluate the cable operations of KPN, the Dutch telecoms and postal group, which are for sale.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Scott Pickford torn between bidders

SCOTT PICKFORD, the geological consultancy, was poised between two bidders yesterday after Core Laboratories, the US geographical company, won the board's approval for a provisional £6.67 million takeover offer. However, Don Scott, Pickford's founder and chairman, has personally rejected the offer and pledged his support to the £6.05 million bid that Aerodata, an Australian geological consultancy, is poised to make.

Mr Scott said the board had approved Core Laboratories' offer from a financial perspective only, adding: "Whether Core Lab's offer would be good for the company is another matter." Aerodata's offer is also being supported by Tony Woodlife and Gabriel Simonian, the two other directors who are siding with Mr Scott in the 3-3 boardroom split. The developments come a day before Pickford activates its share swap with Aerodata, which from tomorrow will leave the Australian firm controlling 33.1 per cent of the company.

Bespak shares surge

SHARES in Bespak continued their strong recovery, jumping 46p to 527.5p, as the asthma inhaler maker reported a 43 per cent rise in first-half profits. In the 26 weeks to November 1, they rose from £3.5 million to £5 million on sales 10 per cent higher at £39.5 million. Bespak was helped by a big rise in the sales of Accuhaler, the dry powder inhaler it makes for Glaxo Wellcome. Sales of Accuhaler reached £4.5 million, causing Bespak UK's sales of drug delivery devices to almost double to £7.5 million. The interim dividend rises 10 per cent to 4.62p, to be paid on February 21.

Salvage firm held back

UNIVERSAL SALVAGE, the UK's largest contract motor salvage company, said growth was being held back by the shortage of suitable claims and auction sites, particularly in the South of England. Cliff Bassett, chairman, said the volume of vehicles handled by the company had grown strongly. But the lack of suitable sites meant a higher number of vehicles were auctioned through existing sites, attended by a relatively stable number of bidders. As a result, prices achieved at auction had fallen. Margins were also adversely affected by the adoption of a new code of practice from the Association of British Insurers.

US factory orders fall

NEW orders to factories in America fell in November, the Commerce Department said yesterday, partially reversing a strong showing in October. Orders fell 0.4 per cent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$320.5 billion, after rising a revised 1.1 per cent in October. But shipments of finished products and order backlogs continued to rise, the department said, suggesting some underlying strength in the industrial sector toward the end of last year. The department said shipments rose 0.9 per cent while both unfilled orders and inventories were up 0.4 per cent.

Payout alert by Union

SHARES in Union fell 12.5p to 81p, yesterday after the financial services and trading group said that it did not expect to pay a final dividend for 1996 and was considering its future direction. The company said that the decision was related to the need to write off advance corporation tax, which it had expected to carry forward. The company also reported delays to a project to sell tax-sheltered software-related products in Canada. Union said that the Bank of England's decision to widen the range of participants in its money market dealings "will have a significant impact on the group's future".

Newmont raises offer

NEWMONT MINING has raised its unsolicited takeover bid for Santa Fe Pacific Gold to \$16.50 per share, or \$2.2 billion, in an attempt to derail the company's proposed merger with Homestake Mining Co. Santa Fe agreed in early December to be acquired by Homestake in a stock deal then valued at \$17.42 per share, or \$2.3 billion. Based on Homestake's \$13.50 price yesterday its bid of 1.115 of its shares for each Santa Fe share would be worth \$2 billion. The latest Newmont offer, of 0.40 of a Newmont share for each Santa Fe share, compares with the initial offer of 0.33 of a share.

FOREIGN RATES

Bank	Bank	Japan Yen	100 Yen
Australia \$	2.25	2.07	0.948
Austria Sch	13.54	13.04	0.948
Belgium F	37.24	36.24	0.948
Canada C	2.02	1.92	0.948
Cyprus Cyp	0.82	0.770	0.948
Denmark Kr	10.64	10.64	0.948
Finland Mk	8.46	7.34	0.948
France F	6.31	6.05	0.948
Germany Dr	2.78	2.55	0.948
Greece Dr	4.22	4.07	0.948
Hong Kong \$	10.71	12.71	0.948
Ireland £	1.00	1.00	0.948
Italy Lit	5.78	5.78	0.948
Italy Lit	2705	2705	0.948

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.



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*Mortgage rates for new borrowers were effective from 23 December 1996. Gross: The rate before the deduction of tax applied to interest on savings. Net: The rate after the deduction of tax applied to interest on savings. Tax Free: Tax free rates that the interest is free of tax applied to interest on savings. All savings interest rates are quoted per annum.

Midland Bank plc, 25 Fenchurch Lane, London EC3A 3SF

□ Savills sees return of housing party □ Surprise, surprise — the Barings affair drags on □ Hacker demands instant action

Home ideal drives market

THE idea that the £100,000 house you live in might be worth £150,000 in three years, or that your £200,000 home could be worth £300,000, might seem cause for celebration. The excesses of the property market during the 1980s were no fun at all if you only arrived at the party in 1999. Rather different if you were there for the entire decade.

Wise heads will shake, and worry about a return to 1980s property madness. Wiser heads might recall that housing market forecasts are generally wrong, in one direction or another. Yet there are arguments to support the prediction by Savills of a 50 per cent increase, nominal, in house prices by the end of the decade.

First, the forecast. Savills expects homes to rise by 12 per cent this year, a fair view whatever the result of the election because Labour's stance on interest rates will be little different from that of the Tories. House price inflation will then increase to 15 per cent in 1998 and 18 per cent in 1999, representing a rise to a 50 per cent compound rise.

Savills is basing its arguments on the historic relationship between earnings and residential prices, which have fallen by more than a third since 1989, and the level of affordability of houses at present. The first ratio is low, the second high. A study just before

Christmas by UBS, the stockbroker, came to the same conclusion, except that UBS saw prices up by 46 per cent from 1996 to end-2000, using slightly different methodology. Here are three reasons for supposing both are right, in spirit, if not in detail.

The rise over three years might not be 50 per cent — that might take five years, or seven, or eight. The distinction is an academic one, if you have any exposure to the housing market.

□ Affordability. Here, UBS added an extra component to the mix. People do not tend to take out mortgages that they cannot afford; they can afford it until higher interest rates or deteriorating personal finances put it beyond reach. UBS assumes a low interest rate environment going forward, and few authorities expect mortgage rates to hit double figures again. In such an environment, borrowers are prepared to commit more of their earnings to house purchases, and lenders can be more innovative in the packages that they offer to smooth out future payments.

□ Scarcity. The Government expects 4.4 million households to be

created by demographics alone over the next two decades. However, builders will continue to be blocked from putting up homes where people wish to live. There can be only one effect on homes lucky enough to be in such areas. □ The trickle-down effect. By the year 2010, most of the children of those who bought homes in the late 1940s and early 1950s will have inherited. The key question is how much of that free capital will go towards a new home, given that they are of an age group that may already own a big enough house, or towards one for their offspring — or on pensions and other higher living costs, such as medical expenses. Any diversion into the property market, however, will react with the scarcity noted above.

Here is one proviso. The housing boom noted by Savills and others is highly selective. The UK has always been a collection of individual housing markets. Demographics — the desire of an ageing population or one now raising children to live in a low-crime environment with good local schools — will increase the disparity in prices



PENNINGTON

between areas, however close they are on the map. This is already happening. Not everyone will be invited to the housing party of the decade.

But try this one test, for which Pennington is indebted to Savills. Do you live in your ideal home? Do any of your contemporaries? Nothing drives markets harder than aspirations that suddenly become affordable.

SFA feeling the draught

THE disciplinary actions of the Securities and Futures Authority after the Barings affair are dragging on so long that they are mainly of relevance to debate

about the structure of City regulation. Presumably investment banks and their customers have by now made their own judgments about the desirability of employing at vast expense those who failed to stop the fraudulent young man who was "earning" their bonuses.

The junior culprit languishes in Changi jail. There is still an atavistic feeling that more heads should be severed over an affair that led not merely to the financial collapse of Barings but also extinguished most of the rest of Britain's leading independent merchant banks.

Like other City regulators, the SFA is better geared to dealing with naughtiness than with incompetence, moral cowardice or sins of omission. The long, sad, expensive tale of the SFA's attempts to pursue cases to its own tribunal against those who did not volunteer to be punished suggests that its procedures sit in a draughty halfway house. It lies somewhere between the rough justice offered by practitioner-regulated professional bodies or by the Bank of England, and the more fearful if random majesty

of the English criminal law or America's Securities and Exchange Commission. No prizes for guessing which way the political wind is blowing.

Forceful marketing, Sir Humphrey

THE scene is the Department of Administrative Affairs. Jim Hacker, Secretary of State, is grilling his civil servants about progress towards privatising the Treasury's economic forecasts.

Hacker: Ah, Sir Humphrey. We agreed that market forces had to be introduced to the Treasury within two years. Why the delay?

Sir Humphrey: The progress towards assessing the feasibility of contracting with a service provider to undertake the central economic forecast of macro-economic aggregates, the forecasting and monitoring of public finances, the work underpinning recommendations about the economic assumptions for public expenditure planning and the regular assessment of out-turn economic data against the forecast has been unable to be

expedited without third party input into the advice and consultation process.

Hacker: I'm sorry?

Bernard Woolley: He means we got a consultant in to help us.

Hacker: I see. But any decision will arrive just before the election. Even if we win, they might still decide it isn't worth it. It's hardly the firm implementation of a policy decision, is it?

Sir Humphrey: If, in the light of the consultant's report, Minister, a market test is confirmed as feasible, potential service providers would be invited to make bids, and Treasury staff would be able to mount an in-house bid with the help of internally-funded external advisers.

Hacker: So we're going to save money by paying our own staff to mount a bid to save their jobs?

Sir Humphrey: Yes, Minister.

Regan-omics

FORGET houses — for a straight rerun of the late 1980s, look at the nonsense surrounding Lancia, the investment shell, run by Andrew Regan, that sounds like a handcream. Whizz-kids, like policemen, seem to get younger; perhaps we need a new stock market measure here. Mr Regan sells on a multiple of 1.18. This is the price his company trades on, in pounds million, for every one of his years.

Morgan and Lehman soar to record profits

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

BOOMING financial markets helped Morgan Stanley and Lehman Brothers to achieve record profits last year, in line with spectacular results reported by other Wall Street investment banks.

Morgan Stanley's profits leapt by 49 per cent to break through \$1 billion for the first time, at \$1.02 billion for the year to November 30. Investment banking, the firm's main area of activity, performed strongly, with a 34 per cent increase in revenues to \$1.9 billion.

Investment banking revenues of \$572 million in the fourth quarter surpassed the previous quarterly record of \$542 million, set in the second quarter of fiscal 1996. The bank said that it had retained

its top ranking in global mergers and acquisitions for the second year running. Trading revenues and revenues from investment management also increased substantially during the year.

Net income for the fourth quarter, to November 30, was up by 26 per cent, at \$236 million, and 8 per cent ahead of the third quarter of fiscal 1996.

The rising stock market and hectic takeover activity in the United States last year gave many banks windfall profits and have pushed annual bonuses to unprecedented levels. Shortly before Christmas, Goldman Sachs announced that its 1996 profits almost matched the bumper year of 1993, and

other banks have unveiled equally impressive profits.

Lehman reported full-year profits of \$416 million, an increase of 84 per cent from the \$223 million profit in 1995. In spite of a \$50 million charge for redundancies and other cost-cutting, the firm enjoyed a 121 per cent rise in its earnings in the fourth quarter, to November 30, to \$177 million.

Richard Fuld, chairman and chief executive, said that it had been by far the best final quarter since the bank went public in 1994.

Lehman said that all of its main businesses, including fixed income, equity and investment banking, produced strong profits. It ranked third in the world among global underwriters of debt and equity issues, and advised on mergers and acquisitions worth more than \$98 billion.

The bank said that part of the jump in profits was attributable to heavy cost-cutting, which has substantially reduced recurring expenses. During the fourth quarter, the firm pulled out of several less profitable markets, including precious metals, around the world and energy trading in the US and Europe.

It also concentrated its foreign exchange activities into fewer offices and consolidated its risk management activities in Asia into its Tokyo office. Together, these rationalisations, which included substantial job losses, required a one-off charge of \$50 million.



Francis Mackay, left, and Roger Matthews, finance director, get first refusal

Autolink wins £370m Scottish road contract

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

SCOTLAND'S first road-building project to be carried out under the Private Finance Initiative has been awarded to a three-way consortium in a £370 million deal.

After a two-year bidding battle, the Scottish Office has given the contract to design, build, finance and operate a motorway linking the M6 at Carlisle with the A74 at Millbank, south of Glasgow, to Autolink Concessions, a company equally owned by Arney, Sir Robert McAlpine and Taylor Woodrow Construction Holdings.

Although the Scottish Office has completed a number of construction deals under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), the Government's drive to involve private enterprise in public infrastructure projects, this is the first road-building contract. In common with other PFI schemes, there were long periods of bidding and tendering.

Two other big road-building contracts under the PFI are on the agenda in Scotland — for additions to the M8 and the M80, although a route for the M80 has yet to be agreed.

The operating cost of £370 million of the venture announced yesterday will run over the contract's 30-year

period. Work will start on the 75-mile stretch of road in spring. It is due to be completed by the next century. New works in the project, including completion of the new part of the M6 and upgrading part of the A74 will account for £200 million of the £370 million.

Arney, the facilities management and construction group, said that the contract will underpin its civil engineering division. Neil Ashley, chairman, said: "These contracts substantially secure our civil engineering workload for the next two years and also give us valuable long-term facilities management and maintenance business."

Babrie Group and Gibb will be design consultants for this first major road development in Scotland in recent years. Morgan Stanley will be the financial adviser. Ashurst Morris Crisp will handle legal work.

The Autolink grouping has been active in PFI work and was last year awarded a £330 million A19 contract. Arney and Sir Robert McAlpine are also involved in the Croydon Tramlink scheme, which started construction this week.

Tempus, page 28
PFI drive, page 30

Sales boost for beleaguered Lloyds Chemists

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

LLOYDS CHEMISTS yesterday reported higher sales in all its divisions in the last three months of 1996, but said that profits were still being hit by the prolonged bid battle between UniChem and Gehe for the company.

Allen Lloyd, chairman of Lloyds Chemists, said that the company will write to shareholders shortly after January 17 to recommend whether to accept Gehe's cash offer or UniChem's cash and shares offer. January 17 is the last date on which either offer may be increased.

Sales in the three months to the end of December, the second quarter of its financial year, were up 8.9 per cent. In the first half sales were 8.5 per cent ahead. Holland & Barrett, the health food chain, had like-for-like sales 5.8 per cent higher in the quarter. Pharmaceutical sales were 12.1 per cent ahead, chemists' sales up 3.5 per cent and health and beauty sales advanced 9.7 per cent.

Gehe commented that the figures "confirm its caution over Lloyds Chemists' trading". Gehe said that the sales made its 500p per share cash bid look "extremely generous".

Lloyds Chemists said that the pharmaceutical division had faced the greatest challenge from the uncertainty surrounding the competing offers from Gehe and UniChem. Retaining key staff had been costly, it said.



Lloyd: guidance on offer

Wickes shares plunge on return from suspension

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SHARES in Wickes, the DIY retailer whose former managers are under investigation by the Serious Fraud Office, closed yesterday at less than half their recalculated price.

The shares, which have been through a ten-for-one consolidation and a rights issue at 150p, began trading again yesterday after being suspended six months ago, and closed at 68p. They were suspended at 68p in June, after serious accounting irregularities were uncovered

in its buying department. But that price was yesterday recalculated by the Stock Exchange — taking into account the capital reconstruction — to stand at 417p.

Analysts said the premium to the rights issue price was because of speculation that another company — probably Kingfisher's B&Q or RMC's Great Mills — intends to bid for Wickes. However, no bidders came forward yesterday and John Richards, analyst with NatWest Markets, said

that neither Kingfisher nor RMC are likely to want to pay a high price for the business.

Other analysts said that potential bidders might be deterred by the confusion the repeated over-statement of profits caused by Wickes's accounts.

The alternative for Wickes is to try to carry on independently, in which case analysts are predicting a modest profit for next year.

Tempus, page 28

Compass in French catering deal

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

COMPASS GROUP, the catering company, has secured a co-operation agreement with Compagnie Générale des Eaux, the French conglomerate, which ensures it has first refusal over catering contracts for Générale's 220,000 employees worldwide.

As part of the deal, Compass is paying £28 million for part of Générale's stake in Compagnie Générale de Restauration, its catering associate. After the deal, Compass will own an 11.7 per cent stake in the catering company, with Générale continuing to own 27 per cent.

Générale, which has UK interests in healthcare and water companies, has already announced it will sell the rest of its stake in the catering company. Compass said it had not signed a binding agreement to buy the rest of the stake, although it would be in a position to influence its sale. Générale de Restauration's management owns a majority stake in the company and has no immediate plans to sell.

Francis Mackay, Compass chief executive, said the deal would strengthen the company's position in the French market, which is the second largest market in Europe.

Tempus, page 28

Jailed Daiwa trader pens critical book

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

THE rogue trader jailed in America for losing Daiwa bank \$1.1 billion in a bond-dealing scandal gives a damning account in a book of incompetence by US and Japanese regulators and dishonesty by his former employer.

In *The Confession*, written in jail, Toshio Iguchi says losses from unauthorised trading would have come to light much earlier but for carelessness by investigators from the Japanese Finance Ministry and the US Federal Reserve. He also accuses Daiwa of trying to cover up the losses and other regulatory transgressions in its New York

office. His account will embarrass the Fed which prides itself on the strictness of its regulation of banks, and to the Finance Ministry. It may also damage Daiwa in ongoing court cases with US authorities over its role in the affair.

He describes Daiwa filing a New York office that had not been authorised with cardboard boxes in 1992 to fool Fed officials into thinking it was not a trading room. The Fed examination which was supposed to take two days lasted 15 minutes and the examiners did not spot the ruse. Although the Fed later discovered it, it still failed to find out about Iguchi's mounting losses.

When Daiwa reported to the Finance Ministry that it was having problems

with the Fed, the ministry sent officials on what was supposed to be a week-long investigation. Iguchi feared he would be found out. However, the officials spent just an hour at Daiwa's midtown office chatting with top executives and failed to visit the Wall Street office. Instead they went to Las Vegas.

Iguchi does not deny his role in racking up one of the biggest dealing losses on record over a decade as a bond dealer in Daiwa's New York office. He undertook hundreds of unauthorised trades and then conspired to cover them up. He admitted to the losses in 1995 and was sentenced in December to four years in prison while Daiwa was banned by the US

authorities from trading in America. Daiwa claims that it only learnt of the loss when Iguchi admitted to it in July 1995. It then informed the Finance Ministry which did not warn US authorities for six weeks, a failure which infuriated the Fed.

Iguchi, however, says he held meetings with senior Daiwa executives to discuss how to hide the losses from US regulators. The executives considered transferring the loss to an offshore shell company in the Cayman Islands. According to his account, Daiwa not only knew about his unauthorised trades but was willing to mislead the banking regulators. Iguchi's book will be published next Tuesday.

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Freezing weather raises temperature in oil sector

THE arctic weather conditions on both sides of the Atlantic have succeeded in focusing investor attention back on the oil sector.

As demand for energy increases, so the price of crude oil on world markets continues to rise. Yesterday the price of Brent crude for February delivery was again creeping higher, with dealers forecasting it will soon pass the \$26.80 a barrel seen in December. They are confident that prices may stay high for some time. "It is unlikely that the price will drop back below \$20 a barrel this year," was the comment of a leading broker.

Credit Lyonnais Laing, the broker, was happy to recommend the sector to clients. Top of its shopping list is Enterprise Oil, up 4p at 639p, and BP, 911p higher at 691p. Gulf Canada's £472 million bid for Clyde Petroleum, 1p firmer at 177p, has also helped to focus support back on the second-line explorers. Lasso rose 6p to 232p. Aviva Petroleum 2p to 331p, and British Borneo 50p to 852p.

The rest of the equity market was unsettled by continuing worries about interest rates and the impact of a strong pound on the big dollar earners. An early opening fall by the Dow Jones industrial average and US Treasury bonds also took their toll on sentiment in London as the market dropped back through the 4,100 level.

After a hesitant start, the FT-SE 100 index continued drifting throughout the day before closing just above its worst with a fall of 27.7 at 4,078.8. Turnover was swollen by bouts of profit-taking with a total of 750 million shares changing hands.

Of the big overseas earners Glaxo Wellcome shed 18p at 913p. Grand Metropolitan 51p at 444p. Unilever 12p at 132p. Reuters 10p at 732p, and BAT Industries 7p at 482p.

Redland was another casualty, falling 14p to a new low of 345p. Not only has it been rattled by talk of a slowdown in economic growth in its biggest market, Germany, but the decline in the share price could also see it lose its place as a constituent of the top 100 companies.

Shares of Wickes returned to market after being suspended for seven months after the discovery of irregularities in



Peter Chambré, left, and Robert Preece of Bescap, up 46p

accounting procedures. It was quoted at 417p after a one-for-ten consolidation and a heavily discounted rights issue at 150p. The price opened at 203p and closed at the low for the day of 196p, with three million shares moving.

Speculation has it that one of the big DIY groups such as Kingfisher, down 4p at 636p, or RMC Group, own-

379p on vague bid talk. Newcomer GB Railways continued to go from strength to strength with the price finishing 32p better at 242p on AIM.

Recent flyer Lantier Trust came in for profit-taking, touching 116.50 before finishing 22p lower on the day at 118.25. Littlewoods, the privately owned retailer and

UK Estates closed unchanged at 27p as the battle of words with Ashbury Group intensified. Ashbury said the UK board no longer deserved the support of its shareholders following its mismanagement and disregard for shareholder interests. Ashbury, un-

moved at 38p, has bid £21 million. The bid closes on Monday.

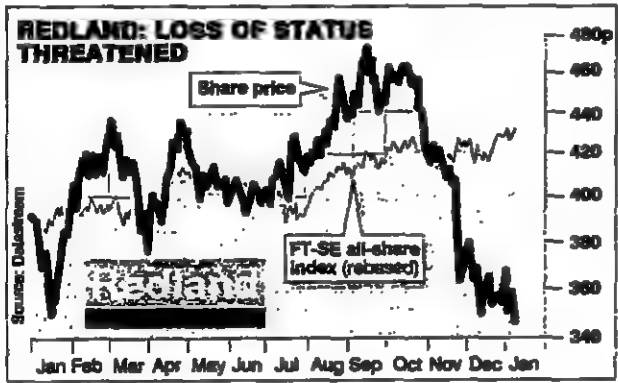
Savills, the estate agent, followed up this week's report that it expects to see house prices surge by 50 per cent during the next three years with a bumper set of first-half results. Pre-tax profits soared 64 per cent to £3 million with the group again highlighting buoyant market conditions.

The shares firm 2p to 101p. The group's achievements rubbed off on Hamble Countrywide, up 3p at 104p. An upbeat trading statement lifted Fleetlist 15p to 351p.

GLT-EDGED: Persistent worries about an imminent rise in interest rates continued dogging bond prices which failed to establish any clear trend. Investors appeared to have one eye focused on this Friday's US employment numbers, fearing they may signal the next move upwards in American interest rates.

The March series of the long gilt finished a tick cheaper at 108p½ as the total number of contracts reached 53,000. In the cash market brokers reported a small steepening of the yield curve as Treasury 8 per cent 2005 fell one tick to 101p½, while Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was a tick better at 102p½.

NEW YORK: Shares suffered broader losses as rising interest rates took their toll. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 38.10 points lower at 6,529.08.



Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan

Share price

FT-SE all-share index (rebased)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan

Share price

FT-SE all-share index (rebased)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan

Share price

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Share price

FT-SE all-share index (rebased)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 6529.08 (-38.10)
S&P Composite 744.21 (-3.46)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 18984.19 (-568.81)
Hang Seng 13420.16 (-37.77)

Amsterdam:
EEX Index 648.26 (-4.50)

Sydney:
All Ordinaries 2007.7 (-9.1)

Frankfurt:
DAX 2886.13 (-4.83)

Singapore:
Straits Times 2266.99 (-0.87)

Brussels:
General 10593.30 (-18.36)

Paris:
CAC-40 2201.69 (-4.98)

Zurich:
SIX Gen 848.80 (-1.50)

London:
FT 100 2794.4 (-25.8)
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At risk on the roads

PRIVATE motorways make little economic sense for the taxpayer. But they might make money for private investors. As the ultimate risk-free borrower, the government enjoys the cheapest interest rates in the land. Why, then, should taxpayers pay tolls on a private road when the government can build one cheaply using builders desperate for business?

The simple reason is that government borrowing levels are too high and, by paying tolls over 20-30 years, the cost is deferred to future governments. Unfortunately such cute accounting and several PFI investment funds has yet to generate a ribbon of privatised highways in Britain. The problem is risk: government theorists assumed that every potential pitfall could be priced by the market. But, in practice, companies refused to bear planning risk and wanted minimum guaran-

teed traffic levels. Without such comfort, the brave buccannering private sector would not step into the road.

Having learnt its lesson, the government backed down and Amey reckons the M6 contract for the Scottish Office should generate a 15 per cent yield on equity. The minimum toll level is enough for the project to wash its face and service a debt issue for an all-up cost of 75 and 100 basis points over the 20-year gilt. But the real money to be made is over the longer term. Amey and its partners must build this road at lower than expected cost and be able to pocket the savings. With equity in the project, Amey has every incentive to build cheaply. For the taxpayer, it is not all gloom. Successful road operators linked to waterfront contracts may be better at repairing roads than a cash-strapped government.

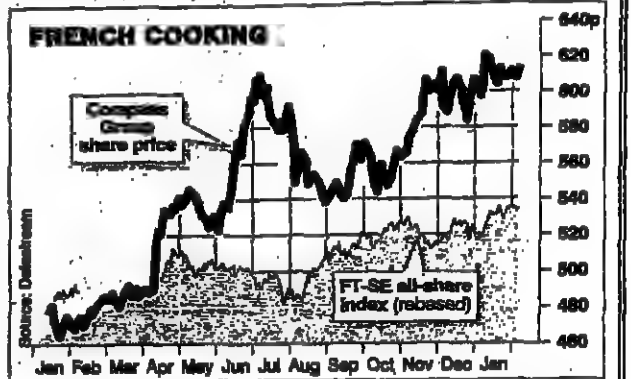
Compass

COMPASS GROUP wants to make more money, especially in continental Europe. To boost its margins, it is chasing a bigger share of the catering market and yesterday's cleverly structured deal with Compagnie Générale des Eaux, the French conglomerate, should push it further along the road.

Compass is gaining first refusal on all Compagnie Générale des Eaux catering contracts. Générale employs about 220,000 workers in 2,000 companies around the world. While the value of the contract is not disclosed, its sheer scale will ensure that it is highly lucrative. Meanwhile, Compass has taken an 11.7 per cent stake in Générale's associate catering company, Compagnie Générale de Restauration. Générale is expected to sell

its remaining 36 per cent stake and although Compass has not made a binding agreement to buy the shares, it has certainly ensured that its rivals, Sodexho and Suedice, will not get a foot in the door. Moreover, if the shareholder managers at Générale de Restauration choose to sell out, Compass will probably have first op-

tion over a company with annual sales of £630 million, mainly in France, where Compass shares have performed strongly over the past year and are now priced at a less than bargain 20 times prospective earnings. But the company looks more than capable of continuing to justify its high price.



Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan

Share price

FT-SE all-share index (rebased)

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Share price

THE TIMES
CITY DIARY

Hansen kicks off for Singer

HAVING outgrown the football pitch, hunky Alan Hansen is heading for the investment world. The former Scottish and Liverpool captain, who boasts a deal with Singer & Friedlander. However, the *March of the Day* commentator who puts Gary Lineker in the shade, will have to toughen-up if he wants to succeed in the City. Recently in London for a session with his new business partners, Hansen brought the meeting to a rather abrupt close. He wanted to get back to his family in Southport — the hipster had a date with his 15-year-old daughter — two tickets for the Boyzone concert.

Archers man

HOWARD DAVIES is obviously working too hard these days. Speaking at yesterday's Oxford Farming Conference, the Deputy Governor of the Bank of England admitted that he gleaned much of his knowledge on the common agricultural policy from listening to *The Archers*. "Relying on that source, I am not as well-informed as I used to be since *The Archers* is now mainly about those other traditional country pursuits — sex, drugs, and violence," he said, adding that, according to the show, David Archer was in the audience. "Too bad, Davies," well-informed listeners will know that Ruth Archer took Phil Archer's place at the conference.



"People say prices will be much better later"

Gilmour's menu

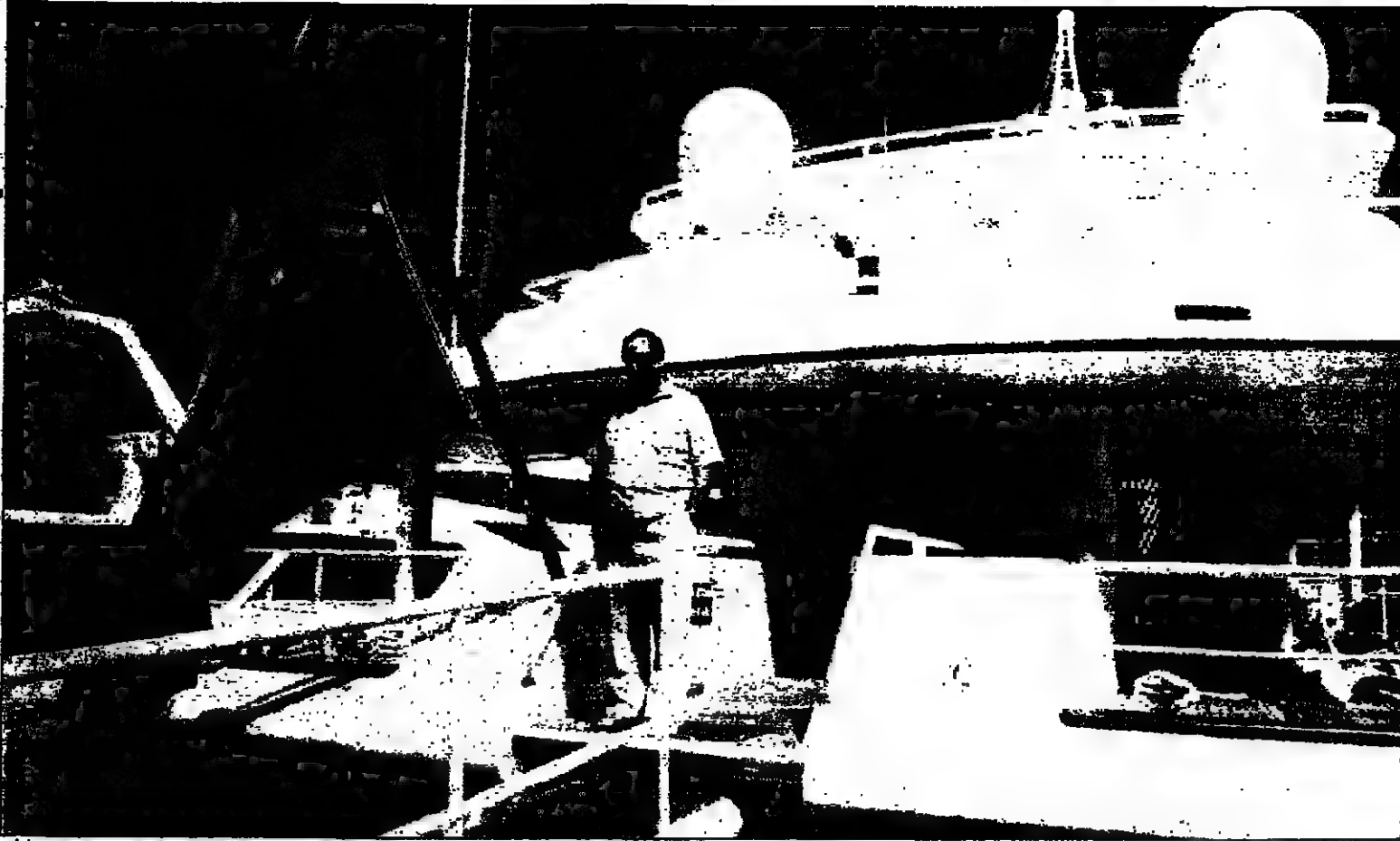
PATRONS of Christopher's restaurant are being forced to eat in the ground-floor café while the Covent Garden watering hole is undergoing a £250,000 make-over. Christopher Gilmour, the owner and son of Lord Gilmour, a former Secretary of State for Defence, hopes to have doubled the size of the restaurant by Easter. The top two levels will be more expensive, while the basement is being converted to a café/bar. "It will be more plush, but still with an American slant," says Gilmour. Could this be in anticipation of a Stock Market listing?

Branson bets

THOSE charitable players at City Index, the sports and financial bookmaker, have opened betting on the number of days Richard Branson will stay in the air. To thank Branson — in their "own small way" — for administering to their complaints last year after a miserable trip back from the Hong Kong Sevens rugby tournament, all profits will be sent to The Global Challenge's nominated charity. City Index's market opened at 13 to 15 days. "There were some big sellers, so faith isn't high," said a spokesman.

ARCHIE NORMAN does not appear to be putting up a strong fight against accusations that he is looking forward to his new role as a politician in order to enjoy more holiday. After setting off for a business meeting in Scotland yesterday, Norman was forced to cut it short, saying he had flu and needed to go home to bed.

MORAG PRESTON



Robert Maxwell aboard *Lady Ghislaine* on which he made his last ill-fated voyage. His death spurred the demand for keyman insurance

Protection for high-flyers is a policy that makes good sense

Gavin Lumsden on the safety net offered to many businesses by keyman insurance

As he rose into the Moroccan skies yesterday aboard the Virgin Global Challenger balloon in his attempt to circumnavigate the world, Richard Branson left behind a business burdened with a £150,000 keyman insurance policy.

If disaster does strike on the 18-day flight Virgin will receive £30 million to compensate for his loss and to fund the search for a replacement.

Adventurous business leaders like Mr Branson underline dramatically the need for companies to insure themselves against the risk of losing their high-flyers. Keyman insurance policies pay out a lump sum to businesses in much the same way that a life insurance policy pays out to families when a breadwinner dies. The level of premium depends on the sum assured and the age and health of the insured.

David Stirling, director at Crispin Speers & Partners, the specialist Lloyd's broker, says: "Although it sounds simple, keyman insurance is in fact a broad area with many different variations. It is useful to compare it with motor insurance, which varies according to the different speeds of cars, different drivers and whether or not they are kept in a garage."

Keyman insurance started in the US, but really began to take off in this country in the wake of Robert Maxwell's death, which devastated his Maxwell Communication Corporation empire. The recent death of Matthew Harding, chairman of the Benfield insurance group and vice-chairman of the Chelsea Football Club, has shown how sensible companies will always prepare for the worst. Mr Harding was insured for £30 million. And, indeed, it is his company that is sponsoring Mr Branson's challenge.

Virgin is unusual for a large company in its need for keyman insurance. Most of the demand comes from smaller companies. Many blue chips such as British Gas feel that they are robust enough to survive the unexpected demise of a director.

Given the fate of Mr Harding, who was killed when his helicopter crashed when he was returning from a football match, it is not surprising that many small companies seek to restrain the exuberance of their bosses. Carlton Cushman, managing director of Versailles Group, the trade financier, who is insured for £5 million, was prevented from flying a Russian MIG fighter last year. "The board refused to let me go saying that I wouldn't be covered to fly such a powerful plane under the keyman policy."

Andrew Cook, chairman and chief executive of William Cook, the Sheffield engineering firm, has been insured for £5 million since 1986 when the company acquired Weir Foundries. The policy, which costs William Cook a £25,000 annual premium, is actually a condition of their lending bank. Mr Cook says: "All it means is if I get run over by a bus the company will get paid a lot of money. I can't do dangerous sports or bungee jumping or other stupid activities — it so happens that it's not my disposition so I don't mind."

Some companies feel they have outgrown the need for keyman insurance. DBS Management, the Huddersfield-based financial services company which floated on AIM last year, is a case in point. Although Ken Davy, its chief executive, has a 29.6 per cent holding there is no policy on him. Martin Greenwood says: "We have had such policies in the past, but as the company has grown, the necessity for keyman insurance has waned."

Corporate actions such as flotations, share issues or acquisitions frequently prompt companies to seek cover for key individuals such as finance directors.

For those smaller companies that do take out the policy it can be a lifesaver

Temporary cover between 6 and 18 months is often extended as companies realise the extent of their liability, says Brian Jackson of Cassidy Davis Life Syndicate. However, problems can arise if merchant bankers sponsoring corporate actions forget about insurance until the last minute. Many issues have been delayed by chief executives who dashed away from final negotiations to undergo medical tests.

And even in more relaxed times problems can crop up if egos are involved. Some individuals are not quite as important as they think they are, and going through a company's accounts to determine how much income a person generates is inevitably a long-winded process. Sometimes it's

not just a question of the company boss going missing. What if your entire staff wins the lottery and heads straight for the door?

Fielding Mann, the Leeds insurance broker, has come up with the solution — a maximum premium of £300 will insure up to 100 employees for £300,000. It has just introduced a keyman version, says Albert Robertson, a manager at the firm — so if your managing director wins a packet from his golf syndicate your company can still get a handout.

Robin Michaelson, director at Crow Life, an underwriting syndicate at Lloyds, which insured Mr Branson for a previous balloon flight, says that policies are usually linked to the length of the individual's contract and last up to ten years.

Most senior executives are not engaged in hazardous leisure pursuits, he says, and £1 million cover for a male non-smoker aged 45 starts at £1,880 a year, although the inclusion of critical illness or permanent disability cover can double this.

Brian Jackson of Cassidy Davis says hobbies such as flying need not make a policy prohibitive, if the key player can prove he has good experience and does not do it very often. For those smaller companies that do take out the policy it can be a lifesaver, and does not require the presence of a mini-Branson. One in three businesses will die or suffer a critical illness disability before retirement, even if they are not in the habit of reaching for the skies. Nevertheless, only 5 per cent of companies have this insurance, compared with 25 per cent in the United States. One firm was paid £300,000 when its managing director developed breast cancer. Another received £39,000 when its 43-year-old chief buyer suffered a heart attack.



ANTHONY HARRIS

Our central bankers: an appreciation

Wanted: second fiddles in a one-man financial band. Candidates must be thick-skinned, but also discreet. Responsibilities are heavy, but performance will be noticed only if things go wrong.

Internal prospects: possible promotion to the top job, which carries high visibility. External prospects: well-paid obscurity. Fringe benefits: unlimited travel, first-class accommodations. Pension: yes, for those who can remain in post. Pay: 50 to 90 per cent below what you are now earning.

You will never see an advertisement like that because it would attract no applications. Yet although it is an accurate description of the lot of most central bankers, there are no unfilled vacancies in the world's great monetary authorities. It is a little like the Washington bureaucracy, which is equally underpaid. Result, as one official told me: "Most of the people you will meet will be nutty, or just plain stupid."

However, central bankers enjoy real power and some independence, so that warning needs rephrasing. Most of the people you meet are either friends of the President, or academics who know how the job should be done — until they try. All the same, it is quite surprising that they do not do worse.

Meanwhile they remain personally irreproachable (well, nearly always), public spirited, and generally nice people to know. Whatever you may read from me about their policies, I do like central bankers: which is more than I can say for politicians, as a class. And that, of course, is the real point of central bankers. Their function is to be not-politicians, and above all not facing elections. Most, all the way from hard money to expansionists, would agree that their job is not at heart technical but to resist financial debauchery, to represent the long term against the short.

That is why they tend to have tense relations with their political masters, or partners, where they have formal independence although this does not really matter much. It is also why so many are wedded to fixed targets or formulae: monetary growth, inflation objectives, or the exchange rate. Formulae, they believe, are more trustworthy than people. This, I believe, is mistaken, and does matter.

These reflections are provoked by some recent central banking appointments, and speeches by central bankers, all monitored by the indefatigable Stephen Lewis, of London Bond Brokers. He notes friends of the President appearing in Washington and in Paris. In Washington, Alan Greenspan has become a friend of the President, so the new arrivals will probably make no difference — unless, of course, something happens to disarrange the chairman's halo.

Proposals, for example, for a return to fixed rules are probably no more than an attempt to weaken Mr Greenspan's dominance.

Paris, though, could be quite a different matter. President Chirac said during his election campaign that monetary policy was too important to be left to monetary technocrats, and Mr Lewis reports that relations between M Chirac and Jean-Claude Trichet, the arch-technocrat in charge of the *franc fort*, have remained chilly.

So the arrival of two Chirac cronies on the monetary council of the Bank of France could well disturb the icy consensus that has ruled there for so long — if not now then as the 1998 elections get nearer. That is a threat real enough to disturb the Bundesbank.

What worries Buba is a future that it may be unable to control, the policy of the European Central Bank. Hans Tietmeyer has proposed that the ECB should adopt the Bundesbank's current practice, M3 targeting. That does not look sensible.

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Economic hangover turning an Asian tiger into a tortoise

Oliver August on the problems sabotaging South Korea's boom

The South Korean economic miracle is blooming in Britain but wilting at home. The country is, by far, the biggest UK inward investor. Four of the top 20 foreign companies coming to Britain are from Korea with LG and Samsung, the industrial conglomerates, at number one and two on the list, having created tens of thousands of UK jobs in the 1990s.

The domestic Korean economy, however, is rapidly turning from an Asian tiger into a tortoise. The current account is showing an equivalent \$22 billion deficit, four times the original forecast. GDP growth dropped by more than 2 per cent last year and numbers for 1997 are again being revised downwards. "Korea has woken up with a hangover at the end of 1996. The economy isn't doing that great," said a senior foreign diplomat in Seoul.

For years, Western economists had been deeply impressed by the export-led Korean success story. While Europe and America were averaging growth rates around 2 per cent, Korea was expanding at four times the rate. Production and sales in electronics and car manufacturing were soaring.

The doom-and-gloom merchants were convinced that the West would lose its economic dominance. The creation of a single European currency was interpreted as an attempt to build a unified front against the tiger economies.

But this no longer seems appropriate. Chinks in Korea's industrial armour have been exposed. The country's main problem is the inefficiency and low flexibility of its labour force. "The labour issue will be the most critical factor in our economy this year," said Sakong Eun-duk, senior economist at the Hanwha Economic Research Institute.



An anti-government protest by workers in Seoul yesterday

The problem is twofold. Salaries have been rising rapidly in recent years as workers demanded their share of the economic miracle. With the average wage equal to \$10,000 they could afford few of the goods they were producing so well. The resulting hike in labour costs meant that building new production facilities in Korea became less attractive. Instead, the Koreans came to Britain. Last autumn Hyundai revealed plans for a £2.4 billion semi-conductor plant in Scotland.

The second aspect of Korea's labour force problem is inflexibility. The Korean economy is dominated by a small number of conglomerates who offer their workers jobs for life. Competition between companies or employees is far from the norm.

To fight the industrial malaise, the Korean Government has now introduced new labour laws undoing decades of near total job security by allowing employers to lay off workers, hire temporary staff and replace strikers.

These changes have sparked nationwide protests. The streets of Seoul have been filled with 200,000 striking workers, who have called for the removal of the government over this issue, and violent clashes with the police seem inevitable.

However, the strike action is only exacerbating Korea's problems. According to the trade ministry, the country has suffered \$1.4 billion in lost production since the strikes started on December 26.

Ironically, the labour dispute is good news for Britain. The trend of building Korean production sites on Britain's green fields is set to become even stronger. The more hostile the domestic climate, the more Korean companies will want to escape abroad.

One unwelcome feature of inward investment, however, is unlikely to change. The Department of Trade and Industry is paying substantial sweeteners to foreign investors. In many cases the DTI is involved in what amounts to an incentive contest with other European governments to convince the likes of Samsung to come to Britain. The demand for sweeteners will increase if troubles continue to mount on the Korean peninsula.

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NOTHING
THE EYE THAT
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Treasury launches drive to streamline PFI



Jack: focus on contract guidelines

A FRESH drive on the Private Finance Initiative, the Government's scheme to pump commercial cash into public projects, will be launched in the next couple of weeks by the Treasury, in a further effort to eliminate bureaucracy in the much-criticised programme.

Michael Jack, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, is expected soon to serve up the first major set of guidelines on the PFI for more than a year with the focus on contracts. Contractual

hurdles have been highlighted by many companies in their attacks on the PFI, which has been hindered by project delays.

The new pronouncement from the Treasury is likely to try to consolidate on the joint move by Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Confederation of British Industry to cut PFI red tape. It will be the first comprehensive set of guidelines since the 1995 Budget when the "private opportunity/public benefit" papers were

launched. In October, Mr Clarke and the CBI joined forces to revive the initiative, which had faced criticism from the CBI the previous summer. Then Mr Clarke said that the Government had learnt its lesson from industry.

Many construction and engineering groups have been harsh critics of the policy because of delays to some projects and the cost of bidding for work.

In its review, the CBI had said that PFI, which was launched in 1992,

was at a critical stage. In the joint government/industry endeavour, standardised contracts were launched and the Government pledged a case-by-case battle against heavy administration and any other problems.

The value of PFI contracts now stands at about £7.5 billion, with fresh figures due out at the end of next month. The Government is working towards a target of £14 billion by the year that ends in March 1999.

Linklaters double first in £1bn City fees league

By ROBERT MILLER

THE CITY's top law firms advising on UK public takeovers earned record fees of about £300 million in 1996.

The latest annual league tables, published yesterday by *Acquisitions Monthly* magazine, show that Linklaters & Paines enjoyed a sparkling year, which saw the City collectively earn more than £1 billion in fees from UK takeovers. Linklaters not only topped the chart of lawyers working for banking teams or companies with 19 mandates worth £19 billion, but also topped the table for legal advisers to companies, with 12 deals worth nearly £16 billion.

Philip Healey, editor of *Acquisitions Monthly*, said that the key to Linklaters' success was "its consistent involvement in £1 billion-plus deals". These included advising Royal Insurance on its £2.4 billion merger with Sun Alliance, and Lloyds TSB on its purchase of the outstanding 37.6 per cent stake in Lloyds Abbey Life, the insurer.

Slaughter and May retained its runner-up position in the table of law firms working for financial advisers or companies with 25 deals, the highest number achieved by any law firm during 1996, which were worth £16.3 bil-

lion. However, Slaughter & May, which acted for Midlands Electricity on its £1.7 billion takeover by General Public Utilities and Cinergy Corporation in the US, fell from first to third place, behind Allen & Overy, in the table of legal advisers to companies.

The law firm that moved furthest and fastest up the tables was Ashurst Morris Crisp. It soared from 13th to fourth place in the main table, with 15 deals totalling £9 billion, and from 11th to fifth in the other.

Freshfields, which topped the 1995 tables with 31 deals totalling £32.2 billion, slipped slightly to the number three and number four spots respectively.

Mr Healey said: "The increasing complexity of deals meant that last year was even better than 1995 in terms of boosting the coffers of the leading law firms." He added: "The combination of no mega-bids and fewer £1 billion-plus mandates was sufficient to cut back overall deal values in 1996, but lawyers can still look back on the year with some satisfaction. Moreover, the current boom in UK mergers and acquisitions augurs well for 1997."



Celebrating a £5 billion record: Bruce Burnett and Alan Palmer, marketing directors of Trebor Bassett and Cadbury

Sweet success for Dairy Milk

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

BRITONS are munching their way through 12 per cent more chocolates and sweets than ten years ago with children and the middle-aged the biggest consumers.

Figures released yesterday by Cadbury Schweppes show that British sales grew 5 per cent last year to a record £4.9 billion and that the UK is the world's third largest consumer of chocolate and sweets,

with people eating 13 kilograms per year and spending an average £1.60 each per week. We trail only Denmark (17kg per person) and Ireland (14kg).

The nation's favourite chocolate, according to the annual confectionery review from Cadbury, is its own Dairy Milk, while the top selling

sweet brand is Wrigley's Extra chewing gum. The most popular chocolate bar was Kit Kat, and Maltesers topped the bag league.

The 45-64 age group buys the most confectionery at 23 per cent of the total. They also eat more — 17 per cent — than any other group except the under-18s (19 per cent). Chocolate continues to make

up most of the confectionery market with 70 per cent of sales.

Cadbury holds a 20 per cent share of the total confectionery market and Trebor Bassett, the group's sweet manufacturing arm, 10 per cent. This compares with Nestlé Rowntree (20 per cent) and Mars (18 per cent).

Kawasaki joins R-R in Trent 900 project

ROLLS-ROYCE'S programme to make the engines that will power the new 600-seater superjumbos being developed by Boeing and Airbus has been joined by Kawasaki. The Japanese group is the first company to become a risk and revenue partner in the Trent 900 programme launched at last year's Farnborough Air Show. Rolls-Royce has agreements with Boeing and Airbus, which are working on different designs for the large-capacity aircraft, for its engines.

Kawasaki Heavy Industries, which has joined other Rolls-Royce ventures, will take on 6 per cent share of the risks in the 900 project in return for 6 per cent of the rewards and will focus on design and manufacture of the turbine. Rolls-Royce is in talks with other aerospace groups for further risk and revenue partnerships. It is expected that it will take those partnerships to 24 per cent of the project in line with its other engine developments.

Reed grows in France

THE French subsidiary of Reed-Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publishing group, yesterday purchased La Documentation Organique, the publisher of a tax-law encyclopaedia for accountants and companies. The purchase price was not disclosed but was said to be small. La Documentation Organique has 29 employees and expects turnover for 1996 of FF19.3 million, or less than £2.2 million. Reed said that the takeover will raise the annual turnover of its French legal publishing operations to about FF120 million.

Tandem chief resigns

TANDEM GROUP, the bicycle maker, yesterday announced the resignation of Robin Garland as chief executive. His departure comes after last year's agreed merger with Cusker and withdrawal from the manufacture, distribution and retailing of garden leisure and horticultural products. The company said that Mr Garland would continue to advise the board on the group's withdrawal from electrical operations, which is now almost complete. Graham Waldron continues as chairman with a new operational board created from the senior management of the bicycle businesses.

Chips market declines

WORLDWIDE semiconductor revenues fell 7 per cent to \$141 billion in 1996, according to Dataquest, the market research firm, after a steep drop in the market for dynamic random access memory (DRAM) chips, the most common computer memory chip. The average selling price for DRAMs fell by three quarters, Dataquest said. Excluding DRAMs, the semiconductor market grew 6 per cent, led by a 14 per cent microcomponent revenue growth. Intel Corp remained the world's leading chip producer, with 29 per cent revenue growth.

EU seeks bank facts

THE European Commission has told France to give details of its latest bail-out plan for state-owned Credit Lyonnais. The Commission, which says it has had no contact with the French authorities since emergency measures were approved in September, is writing "to demand urgent communication of these details". The Commission allowed emergency finance of FF3.9 billion to enable the bank to issue delayed interim results showing a small profit of FF7 million, but complained that Paris had not respected a reporting condition of a past rescue.

Hays wins S&N deal

HAYS, the business services group, has won a £20 million contract to become the sole logistics supplier for the take-home drink products of Scottish & Newcastle. Hays, which already distributes around half of the brewer's take-home volumes, will take full command of the new contract from the end of next month. Ronnie Frost, executive chairman of Hays, said that the new contract would provide significant opportunities for improving efficiency. At one stage yesterday shares in Hays fell 2p, to 54p.

Japan merger relaxation

JAPAN'S fair trade watchdog hopes to ease rules for mergers, which could pave the way for big corporate tie-ups and strengthen companies' global competitiveness. The Fair Trade Commission (FTC) said it may simplify procedures by allowing certain mergers to be conducted without the need for watchdog approval. This would involve dropping application requirements for mergers between small companies with total assets of less than 10 billion yen (£1.24 million) each, as well as for those within the same corporate group.

Buyout at Merrychef

MERRYCHEF, the designer and manufacturer of commercial microwave ovens based in Hampshire, has been acquired by its management team. The company, which has been trading since 1945, employs 70 people and has a customer base which includes supply contracts with Scottish & Newcastle, Bass Taverns, Granada, Rank, Tesco, J Sainsbury and City Centre Restaurants. The management is led by Reece Houghton, with funding led by 3i, who invested £7.3 million. Senior debt and banking facilities have been provided by Bank of Scotland.

Try Group optimistic

TRY GROUP, the contractor and housebuilder, expects to meet its forecasts for 1996 and sees promising signs for 1997, the company said yesterday. The contracting order book was boosted by £35 million in the final six weeks of last year and now stands at £110 million. The disposal of Try's plant hire subsidiary and the favourable timing of some payments meant that Try had net cash of £5.5 million at the year end. New homes at two sites in London are selling more quickly than budgeted. Try shares rose 3p to 16p yesterday.

Gartland Whalley & Barker to plant seed of US growth

By MARTIN BARROW

GARTLAND WHALLEY & BARKER, the fast-growing venture capital business managed by former senior executives of F&I, plans to establish a parallel business in America.

Tony Gartland, chairman, said America represented the next major stage of growth for the group, enabling it to invest in businesses at an early stage of their development.

GWB, which gained a listing on the Alternative Investment Market in August after the reverse takeover of Select Industries, yesterday reported a 20 per cent rise in the value of investments to £57.4 million for the year to October 31.

Pre-tax profits increased to £12.7 million, from £5.5 million in the previous 12 months, and earnings more than trebled to 11.07p a share (3.07p). GWB, which functioned as a public company for only the final seven weeks of the financial year, recommends a dividend of 0.32p a share. This dividend will be the first received by Select shareholders since 1988. Mr Gartland said GWB had made an even stronger start to

the current financial year. The flotation of Aquarius Group, a designer of household accessories, valued shares and warrants held by GWB at £21.6 million at December 20, a surplus of £14.6 million over original cost.

Mr Gartland, whose fellow directors include Jeff Whalley and Lord King, said the company proposed to increase dividends at a faster rate than earnings. The shares rose 9p to a new high of 104p.



Gartland: dividend growth

Scottish Equitable evaluation after £2bn deal

Insurers' credit status reviewed

By ADAM JONES

THE credit-worthiness of Scottish Equitable's life insurance operation is to be reviewed by Moody's, the international rating agency.

The reassessment of the financial strength rating, with a view to downgrading, follows the £2 billion purchase of a life insurer in the US by Aegon, Scottish Equitable's Dutch parent company. The purchase of the insurance operations of Provident, announced last week, will involve Aegon taking on about £500 million of debt.

Moody's currently gives Scottish Equitable a financial

strength rating — a measure of a company's ability to pay long-term liabilities — of Aaa. This is two grades short of the top rating of Aaa.

A spokesman for Scottish Equitable said: "Any large transaction triggers an automatic evaluation of all the group's companies. We can just put it down to that."

He said that he was bemused by any assumption that downgrading was likely. Moody's is also reviewing Norwich Union's rating in case demutualisation increases borrowings.

Yesterday, Moody's also published a general report on the UK life insurance indus-

try. It said that life insurance companies may find their high credit ratings lowered by increasing competition.

The bad image of the industry and the difficulty of generating capital from operations are also putting pressure on credit ratings, it found.

However, the financial strength of insurance companies was stable in 1996, according to an assessment of 19 companies. Their ratings range from Aaa, awarded to Prudential Assurance and Standard Life Assurance, to A3, awarded to the Scottish Provident and Eagle Star Life Assurance.

In spite of the prospect of a

shakeout prompted by increased competition, Mark Oldcorn, a Moody's analyst, said that the industry as a whole experienced a reversal of fortune in 1996. "Sales have improved from 1995, which was a very difficult year after the mis-selling," he said.

The report said that improvements in investment markets had combined with the increase in new business to brighten the outlook. Much of the new business may not, however, be profitable; it said, since some insurers were cutting costs aggressively to squeeze smaller companies. A bear market could also shrink life offices' capitalisation.

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From Felicity Kendal, starring at the Old Vic in a new staging of Granville-Barker's *Waste*...



PREVIEW
...and Val Kilmer, playing Leslie Charteris's smooth detective in a new big-screen version of *The Saint*...

THE TIMES ARTS



PREVIEW
...to the Royal Ballet's staging of Twyla Tharp's *Push Comes to Shove* at Covent Garden...



PREVIEW
...and a batch of concerts marking Schubert's bicentenary: *Times* critics choose the top spring shows

Braque at the Royal Academy, Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet*: *Times* critics pick the hottest tickets ahead

Shows that bloom in the spring

Richard Cork
Despite his outstanding contribution to 20th-century painting, Georges Braque has always suffered in comparison with the overwhelming fame of his friend Picasso. Only now is the Royal Academy staging the first British exhibition to examine his later work (Jan 23-April 6). Key loans from collections across the world will reveal how the older Braque created a lyrical and mysterious world, especially in his culminating series based on the theme of the artist's studio.

But British art will not be neglected in 1997. At the National Gallery, the precocity of the young Gainsborough is surveyed (Jan 29-March 31). Less well-known paintings will extend our knowledge of an artist whose early work is often effortlessly beguiling.

Paula Rego, by contrast, took a long time to arrive at her present reputation. Born in Lisbon and trained at the Slade School in London, she explored a remarkable range of styles before defining her mature identity. The full variety of Rego's work, from 1959 to 1995, will be displayed for the first time at the Tate Liverpool (Feb 8-April 13). Even her best-known later works will be seen in a new light, with the help of preparatory drawings never exhibited before.

The astonishing vitality of British art before the First World War is explored in a major exhibition at the Barbican Art Gallery (Feb 20-May 26). Young artists in London were stimulated by the daring of continental movements, and the Barbican show will display Cézanne, Gauguin, Picasso and Matisse alongside home-grown work by David Bomberg, Wyndham Lewis, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant.

During the same period, the German painter Lovis Corinth underwent a momentous change. In the late 19th century he had pioneered Impressionism in his own country, but in middle age his style moved towards a far more powerful form of Expressionism. His long and turbulent career will be explored in a large Tate Gallery retrospective (Feb 20-May 4). Devotees of photography are bound to savour the August Sander exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery (Feb 28-June 8). Now considered a towering figure in the history of German photography, Sander was born in 1876. But he only achieved greatness from the 1920s onwards, after starting an immensely ambitious project called "People of the Twentieth Century". The 200 images in this new show all come from Sander's own collection.

If Sander's work only achieved international fame after his death in 1964, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema looked in enormous popularity during his lifetime. Modernists despised him for many years, but the large retrospective at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (March 21-June 8) reflects a recent revival of interest in his languorous Mediterranean idylls.

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Studio VIII (1954-55) by Georges Braque, a highlight of the coming season when the Royal Academy stages the first British exhibition of his later work (from January 23)

Debra Crane
English National Ballet says farewell to the Festival Hall next week after more than 40 years of performances on the South Bank. The company, which moves its London seasons to the Coliseum later this year, is bowing out with Ronald Hynd's fine staging of *Coppelia* (from Monday). There are plenty of new ENB dancers to catch up with, including the popular Hungarian Zoltan Solymosi (you may remember him from Covent Garden). Meanwhile, ENB's spring tour (opening Feb 17 at the Palace Theatre, Manchester) features the first performances by an English company of Balanchine's *Who Cares?*

One of the most successful ballets of the Seventies makes its way to Covent Garden on February 13 when the Royal Ballet brings Twyla Tharp's *Push Comes to Shove* into the repertoire. Tharp made the one-act in 1976 for the extraordinary Mikhail Baryshnikov;

this time around it's the Royal's Tetsuya Kurokawa wearing the bowler hat. On April 30 Glen Tetley unravels his new ballet for Covent Garden, his first commission for the Royal since his *Dances of Albion* in 1980. No details are available yet, except that Nadine Baylis will be doing the designs. On a smaller scale, Dance Bites sees the Royal touring a programme of short works by Matthew Hart, Tom Sapsford, William Tuckett, Cathy Marston, Christopher Wheelton and Ashley Page (opens at the Lyceum in Sheffield on March 3). MacMillan's Mahler ballet *Song of the Earth* enters the Birmingham Royal Ballet repertoire in Birmingham (Feb 25 at the Hippodrome) before going out on tour. A new work by Lila York is

premiered at the Mayflower in Southampton on May 15, and comes to the Royal Opera House as part of BRB's last season there before closure (season opens June 9).

Rambert Dance Company performs work by the artistic director Christopher Bruce on its current tour, including Bruce's latest *Stream*. Adventures in Motion Pictures, still enjoying the triumph of its West End run of *Swan Lake*, celebrates its tenth anniversary on February 25 at The Place with a revival of Matthew Bourne's witty take on *La Sylphide*, *Highland Fling*. Scottish Ballet opens Woking's second Dance Umbrella festival with the "real" *La Sylphide*, courtesy of Bournemouth (Feb 25, New Victoria Theatre); while Philippe Decouflé, the man who choreographed the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1992 Winter Olympics, brings his dazzling new show *Decoder* to Woking (March 6-8).

MUSIC
Richard Morrison
How could our musical life survive without its anniversaries? This spring there is hardly a concert that isn't marking somebody's birth, death or birthday. Schubert, born 200 years ago, takes centre stage at the Wigmore Hall, where Andras Schiff leads a gala on the birthday (Jan 31), then begins a Schubert piano cycle (from Feb 5). Jan Bostridge, the upwardly-mobile tenor, tours Schubert's *Winterreise*. And the violinist Gidon Kremer couples Schubert with Schubert-inspired new music in a series (Jan 20, March 7, April 7) that the Barbican shares with Cologne, Paris and Amsterdam.

The London Symphony Orchestra offers buckets of Brahms at the Barbican (from Jan 29): the old boy died 100 years ago. And later the LSO alights on — guess what? — another Significant Date. Mstislav Rostropovich will be 70, so the great cellist's life, virtuosity and

idiosyncratic conducting are celebrated with a Barbican series from March 8. Julian Bream has discovered that it is 50 years since he first strummed a guitar in public. This, too, produces a concert (Queen Elizabeth Hall, Jan 16). The Halle Orchestra has discovered John Adams's 50th birthday, so the American minimalist-with-romantic tendencies is invited to Manchester to conduct his new work (Jan 23).

There are also ongoing celebrations of the millennium. Simon Rattle's ten-year *Towards the Millennium* series has reached the music of the Sixties. He launches this instalment with a Henze/Stravinsky concert (Birmingham Feb 27, Festival Hall Feb 28). This must not be confused with the BBC's

Sounding the Century series, which opens with a barrage of Stravinsky (including a televised event on Feb 16 conducted by Boulez), and runs to 1999.

What doesn't mark an anniversary? Well, the celebrations in Belfast are all about the new Waterfront Hall: the Ulster Orchestra shares the inaugural festival (from Jan 17) with the St Petersburg Philharmonic. The London Sinfonietta offers a crash course in new Scottish music (South Bank, Feb 15-16). The BBC Symphony Orchestra presents a similarly intense weekend devoted to the late, moderately great Polish composer Witold Lutoslawski (Barbican, Jan 7-19).

James MacMillan's Clarinet Concerto is premiered by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (Glasgow, April 5). And, for those who like slightly older sounds, Cambridge (Jesus College) and Bristol (St George's) are sharing a Medieval Music Festival (March 6-9).

Benedict Nightingale
Exit the RSC, re-enter the RSC's founder: the Barbican for six months in early April, by which time it will have transferred three more of last season's Stratford offerings to the Pit, prime among them *Three Hours After Marriage*, a farcical portrait of 18th-century marital manners by Pope, Gay and Arbuthnot (Jan 28). But at least we will have compensation in the form of Sir Peter Hall's first season at the Old Vic.

This opens with Granville-Barker's *Waste* (March 14), in which Michael Pennington's senior politician is ruined by a dangerous liaison with Felicity Kendal. Then come a revival of Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* by Theatre de Complicité's Simon McBurney (April 18); and Maria Friedman in Gershwin and Weill's *Lady in the Dark* (March 11).

Elsewhere in the non-profit-making sector, the Almeida offers Ralph Fiennes in Chekhov's *Ivanov* (Feb 19); Max Stafford-Clark's admirable Out

of Joint company comes to Hampstead with a play about emotional chaos among social workers and men's groups, April de Angelis's *Positive Hour* (March 4); the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, plays host to maybe the best play yet about Asians in Britain, Ayub Khan-Din's *East is East* (Feb 5); and the Royal Court presents Doug Lucie's doubtless scathing attack on media moguls, *The Shallow End*, at the Duke of York's (Feb 17).

The West End picture is less certain. The hugely admired Schmitzler-derived musical *Romance*, *Romance* may hit the Gielgud in early March, but the big event looks like being Stephen Churchill's *Tom and Clem* (April 9). This brings Michael Gambon and Alec McCowen to the Aldwych as the maverick MP Tom Driberg and his long-suffering leader, Clement Attlee.

And let's not forget Cliff Richard and Emily Brontë. The singing knight arrives in and as *Heathcliff* at Labatt's Apollo on February 12 after a four-month tour that has inexplicably bypassed Stratford, Nottingham, Cambridge and Glasgow. Still, those burghs can take solace in the prospect of (respectively) Tennessee Williams's surreal *Camino Real* (Feb 27), a co-production with the National Theatre of Uganda's *Mothers Courage* (April 23), the premiere of Ariel Dorfman's *Widows* (March 3), and *Babycakes*, the Tron Theatre's adaptation of Arminster Maupin's *Tales of the City* (Jan 25).



Stand by in February for Kenneth Branagh's four-hour *Hamlet* and Jane Campion's *The Portrait of a Lady*

The play's the thing this winter, with various new movie adaptations of Shakespeare to add to those already out and about. Al Pacino gets in first (Jan 31) with his directorial debut *Looking for Richard*, a lively, fast-paced piece that dovetails filmed scenes from *Richard III* with a comic record of the struggles in bringing the Bard to life for audiences and actors today. His colleagues include Alec Baldwin (Clarence) and Winona Ryder (Lady Anne).

Two weeks later Kenneth Branagh weighs in with his ambitious, four-hour *Hamlet*, aimed at the mainstream audiences who enjoyed his *Much Ado About Nothing*. Every word and comma of the Shakespeare text is filmed in Branagh's usual eclectic, ritzy manner, in a 19th-century setting. Every living actor is also present, from Billy Crystal (First Gravedigger) to John Mills (Old Norway). Branagh, hair coloured a Nordic blond, is the troubled Prince; Julie Christie is Gertrude, and Derek Jacobi Claudius.

After six weeks' respite, *Romeo and Juliet* gets the shock treatment in an electric film by Baz Luhrmann, the

CINEMA

Geoff Brown

Australian director of *Strictly Ballroom*. Forget Shakespeare's Verona: this version takes place in Verona Beach, where the accent is strongly American, and young actors like Leonardo DiCaprio (Romeo) and Claire Danes (Juliet) seem right at home.

The classic novel is not forgotten. Jane Campion's version of *The Portrait of a Lady* opens on February 28. This is no pretty costume drama: in her first film since *The Piano*, Campion sculpts icy elegant and mysterious images to tell Henry James's story about an independent-minded American woman sucked into marriage in Europe. Nicole Kidman is admirable as Isobel Archer: her eventual husband is played by John Malkovich, quirks well to the fore.

After all this culture, though, you must be starving for a Hollywood knees-up. How about *The Saint*, directed by Philip Noyce, with Val Kilmer: a big-screen revival of Leslie Charteris's



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debonair detective portrayed on television by Roger Moore? This arrives in March. Or if you prefer your heroes from pulp fiction and comic strips, that crime-fighting phenomenon *The Phantom* swirls into cinemas on February 14 in the form of Billy Zane. The connoisseur's choice, though, will probably be *Mars Attacks!*, the latest hymn to American lowbrow culture from director Tim Burton. His subject here is the Fifties alien invasion movie, and he recreates the genre with some spiffing designs, tongue firmly in cheek, and an astonishing roster of star names, starting with Jack Nicholson (the US President, no less) and ending with Tom Jones.

Foreign-language films are thin on the ground, but France supplies two genuine pleasures. On February 7, Patrice Leconte's diverting costume piece *Ridicule* makes its bow: prepare for dry, witty dialogue, and piles of intrigue at the Court of Versailles. Then, way into the future in early April, comes Jacques Audiard's *A Self-Made Hero*, a captivating comic tale of deception during the Second World War.

OPERA

John Allison

The single outstanding operatic event is the first professional staging in Britain of *Pales-trina* at Covent Garden. Hans Pfitzner's stirring "musical legend" is much talked-about but little known: it hymns the sacred power of music to save a declining culture — lofty subject-matter, for which Nikolaus Lehnhoff is probably the right producer. Too many distinguished singers to list, but Nicolai Gedda's appearance in a cameo role suggests the level of casting to expect (opens Jan 28).

The Royal Opera has saved the season's best revivals for now, and none is more excitingly cast than *Lohengrin* (Feb 8), with Karita Mattila, matchless in this repertoire, Gösta Winbergh, Sergei Leiferkus and the veteran Gwyneth Jones.

English National Opera's hot ticket is likely to be a new production of

Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice* by the director-choreographer Martha Clarke, conducted by Jane Glover (March 3). Michael Chance and Lesley Garrett take the title roles. Della Jones replaces the originally announced Sally Burgess as the shipwrecked Isabella in the new Italian *Girl in Algers* (Jan 18).

Patrice Caurier and Moshe Leiser will stage *Carmen* for Welsh National Opera (Feb 15); with a cast including Sara Fulgoni and Edmund Barham it should be seen. Scottish Opera's new *Fledermaus* (Glasgow, Feb 12) features a lively cast, and Giles Haverall's production is promised as being slap bang in the opera's frothy period. Two of the greatest Italian operas reach Opera North in new stagings: *Falstaff* (Jan 16) and *The Return of Ulysses* (April 15). Back in London, *Carmen* is at the Albert Hall (Feb 6). Having apparently learnt from the mistakes of his *Bohème* last year, Raymond Gubbay has now hired a better production team.

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CHOICE 1

Countertenor in the spotlight: Michael Chance shows his range

VENUE: Tonight (6pm) at the Wigmore Hall



CHOICE 2

Conductor Mark Wigglesworth offers a concert of Lutoslawski

VENUE: Today (1.05pm) at St David's Hall, Cardiff

THE TIMES ARTS



CHOICE 3

Verdi on the road: *La traviata* comes to Guildford

VENUE: Until Saturday at the Yvonne Arnaud



VISUAL ART

Work by Tony Oursler and others goes on board a new cruise ship with a difference

LONDON

ALL OF YOU HERE The Bush Theatre mounts a five-month celebration with a world premiere. Written by Dennis Potter Award-winner Richard Cramer, whose previous Bush productions include *Pond Life* and *The Moral Ash*, *All of You Here* is a comedy about a community. Simon Usher directs. Bush, Shepherds Bush Green, W12 (0181 743 3388). Preview tonight and tomorrow. 8pm. Opens Friday 7pm. Then Mon-Sat, 8pm. Until February 8

THE ART OF ILLUSTRATION The Guildenstern Gallery is staging an exhibition to coincide with the Folio Society's 50th anniversary, featuring 50 of the best artists for the Folio Society's prize to illustrate a literary classic, including Edgar Allan Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, and Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. Guildenstern Gallery, 101-103 Tottenham Court Road, W1P 0LP. (0171-580 4444). Daily, 10am-6pm. Until January 16

WIGMORE DOUBLES Today's Ninth Hour concert at 6pm is given by Michael Chance, countertenor, and Julius Drake, piano. The programme includes Tappin's *Songs for Michael Chance*, a Shostakovich *Violin Concerto*, and a Shostakovich *Violin Concerto*. At 8pm, the Keller Quartet

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Upon a painted ocean

VISUAL ART: Masters are not confined to the bridge of the liner *Galaxy*, Guy Walters writes

Works of art in restaurants tend to go unnoticed. Proprietors, in their bid to add a touch of class, often slap up some vast abstract canvas in order to impress the diners, but Sir and Madam don't really care, so long as the food is as good as it is expensive and there is something to occupy their minds. So what better way to spend a few hours than surveying some fine works of art?

If you sailed on *Celebrity Cruises'* new ship *Galaxy*, your tour of inspection would take a long time indeed. Weighing 77,500 tonnes, the recently completed *Galaxy* contains 450 works valued at about £2 million. According to the brochure, this is "the finest collection of contemporary art exhibited aboard a cruise ship". Apparently "nothing compares to the *Galaxy's* Art Collection".

Can this be true? There are certainly some big names represented on board. Koons, Beuys, Johns, Rauschenberg and Lichtenstein all rub frames in the *Galaxy's* Trump Tower-meets-carshowroom splendour. There are also some sturdy middleweights — Georg Baselitz, Polly Apfelbaum, Sean Landers and Jack Pierson. Thrown in are some obscure German works, mostly abstract and useful for filling the odd blank space.

Surprisingly, many of the works are first-rate. It would be easy to expect a cargo of pieces chosen for their appeal to the bauble-laden Las Vegas set, but the Rauschenberg is a pleasant intaglio, the Koons is a typically naïf statue

of a white terrier, the Beuys a simple woodcut and the Johns a joyously squiggly lithograph. The Lichtensteins are disappointing. Being recent, they are fairly dreary and predictable, but they look fine for a cruise ship.

However, many of the pieces are let down by the *Galaxy's* upholstery. The carpets are largely Dayglo and hallucinogenic, clashing sensationally with some of the most colourful pieces and more or less murdering the subtle. Art doesn't have to be hung on white walls, but many of the pieces on the *Galaxy* would benefit from being so.

The collection was assembled by Christina Chandris, the wife of the company's chairman. She had the enviable task of jettisoning between New York and London to snap up what she saw fit. "I tried to take into account the environment in which I hung things," she says. "I didn't want the pictures fighting with the ship." It is debatable whether she succeeded.

Security does not seem to be a particular concern, presumably on the ground that



POP

After her annus mirabilis, what next for the veteran folk heroine, Norma Waterson?



RISING STAR

Fame on a shoestring: Molly Gaisford has turned producer to launch her acting career

THE TIMES ARTS



TOMORROW

How does Barbra Streisand rate in *The Mirror Has Two Faces*? Read Geoff Brown's review of new films



TOMORROW

... and Charles Mackerras's fine new Beethoven interpretation is among the classical CDs reviewed

Different class, as Jarvis would put it

Bigger than Oasis? Well not quite, but it is a tempting line for any publicist. Last autumn Norma Waterson famously saw off not only the Gallagher brothers but also the Manic Street Preachers and Black Grape when she was voted runner-up for the Mercury Music Prize. Only *Different Class*, by Jarvis Cocker's Pulp, prevented her carrying off the top prize and the most unlikely victory since Aesop's tortoise taught the hare a lesson never to be forgotten. But a few months after all the fuss, her five minutes of pop fame have not so much changed her life as left her mildly bemused. "I read the newspapers and have to remind myself that this is me they are talking about," she says.

Some things have changed: without the Mercury it is doubtful that she would this Sunday be selling out one of London's biggest rock venues, the Shepherd's Bush Empire. And, she says, "people do come up to me in the street and say: 'Aren't you that lady who won that prize?'" She loved the experience, but after 30 years as the doyenne of traditional English folk singing it would take more than a convivial evening with Liam and the lads to launch her on a new career as the latest Britpop sensation. "The food was good, I enjoyed the champagne and I thought the music was great, especially Pulp. But it hasn't changed what I do."

The popular papers, of course, revelled in the bizarre spectacle of a Yorkshire grandmother competing against Pulp and Oasis for pop's biggest prize. Much was made of her 57 years and, if the Spice Girls ever decide to recruit a sixth member, Waterson is unlikely to be on the shortlist. But she has a pleasing and expressive face and it seemed that picture editors deliberately sought the most unflattering photographs, so that her alleged lack of glamour became part of the story. "That didn't hurt at all," says a woman who is content if people find beauty in her voice. If anything

Only Pulp finished ahead of the legendary folk singer Norma Waterson in last year's Mercury stakes. Nigel Williamson reports

she has played up to the granny image: when the album that won her the nomination started receiving rave reviews she told her record company that the music press was "only being nice because I'm a little old lady".

Strangely, the album — which David Sinclair also nominated one of his three favourites of 1996 in *The Times* — was her first solo recording in a career which began in the pubs and folk clubs of Hull in the late 1950s. She herself is not quite sure why the solo album was so long in coming. "I suppose no one asked me before," she says.

"All my life I've sung unaccompanied traditional music, but I've always sung with my family and that always seemed enough. It was an indulgence to go to Hollywood and record new songs with other musicians. I loved doing it, but I thought it would fade out of sight. No one was more surprised than me at the way the album took off."

Traditional music has for long been a cottage industry for the extended Waterson family. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s she performed with her sister Lal, brother Mike and cousin John Harrison as the Watsonsons, four magnificent unaccompanied voices that produced some of the most influential folk albums ever recorded. Later they were augmented by Waterson's husband, the guitarist Martin Carthy.

Most recently she and Carthy have been working and recording with their daughter Eliza, an exuberant fiddler and one of the brightest young hopes on the

English folk scene. It is this family unit which will perform in London this weekend. The new album, due in the spring, sees a return to traditional material. It is also a collaborative effort and features no fewer than seven members of the family in different guises. Now, of course, the record company wants another solo album, which Waterson will start recording in the autumn. Will it be traditional or contemporary songs? "All sorts. The world is my oyster now," she says.

"How about Norma Waterson sings George Formby?" Her voice is so honest, so full of conviction, you feel that she could probably sing the telephone directory, let alone *When I'm Cleaning Windows*, and still move people. Carthy has said that his wife is shy, even timid, but once she opens her mouth and begins to sing she knows no fear. "Singing feels very sexual to me," she says.

"Sometimes it feels like I'm flying, almost as if the voice is not a part of me at all." That Britain's finest traditional singer had to record an album of contemporary songs before the pop world took any notice is perhaps not surprising. Not only was the choice of material a departure, but her rich, earthy voice had never before been recorded against an amplified backing. But she says she approached songs by the likes of Billy Bragg, Elvis Costello and even the Grateful Dead in exactly the same way as traditional material. "You try and tell a story. They are just human songs about people's lives. I hope it doesn't sound

Punk should have happened in the folk clubs

like a copy of some transatlantic thing. It is meant to sound very English."

This sense of her own roots lies at the heart of Waterson's music. "There is not enough emphasis on the English tradition," she says. "Over the centuries the Church and the State have conspired to make the English embarrassed about their own folk culture. When we play English traditional music in America or Canada they think it is wonderful. Over here people behave as if English heritage consists of nothing more than Buckingham Palace and the Changing of the Guard."

Despite her reputation as a great traditionalist, Waterson is critical of the folk world for failing to embrace new — and often brash — young ideas. This makes it no surprise that she felt so at home with the Britpop pack at the Mercury awards. "When punk came about it should have happened in the folk clubs," she says. "But the punks weren't allowed in and that is why folk music stagnated."

But she refuses to be pessimistic. "The fact that traditional music is still performed at all is a miracle in the age of television," she says. "The old songs are as relevant as ever. They are about love, death, incest, murder, unhappiness — the basic things that keep the world going round."

And what next? "We've been doing this for 30 years, and we'll just keep on doing it. Getting on planes, getting in cars, going to the next gig until the voice gives out." She was off the morning after we met for an eight-day tour of Japan. "We grumble sometimes but we are incredibly lucky. If I wasn't here right now I'd probably be doing the ironing."

Norma Waterson, Martin Carthy and Eliza Carthy play at the Shepherd's Bush Empire, London, on Sunday. Norma Waterson's solo album is released by Hannibal Records



For decades Norma Waterson sang pure folk with her family. Now the pop charts know her as well

JAZZ IN LONDON: A spirited saxophonist, and a gifted gospel singer

Rhythms to chase away the flu blues

WHEN the January wind blows through the streets and winter ailments mount up, an undiluted dose of Houston Person's tenor saxophone goes a long way toward lifting the spirits. Listeners who, like me, felt distinctly below par at the beginning of this performance could not have failed to be cheered by his unpretentious gris 'n' gravy recipe.

Players of his pedigree, schooled in the no-nonsense ethos of rhythm and blues and that durable hybrid known as soul-jazz, are too often treated with a measure of condescen-

sion. His undemonstrative manner should not be mistaken for that of a lightweight.

A reliable partner for the singer Etta Jones on one album after another, he has also turned up in the unlikely company of pianist Ran Blake — one of Gunther Schuller's colleagues at the New England Conservatory — exploring stark, gospel-flavoured duets on the disc *Suffield Gothic*.

His set at the Jazz Café

Houston Person
Jazz Café

contained nothing as unorthodox as that. But even when wandering no further afield than an up-tempo blues or the familiar melody of *My Funny Valentine*, Person always impressed with the economy and precision of his soloing. Even when he occasionally gave the impression that he was dropping down a gear or two (a reasonable enough play in a musician in his sixties) he was always guaranteed to seize our attention with a crisply execut-

ed glissando or a brusque R&B riff.

Of the musicians in his highly efficient quartet, it was drummer Winston Clifford who made the deepest impression, combining precise time-keeping with an exuberant flurry of cross-beats. Whenever Person cooked a greasy slow blues, honked out a quotation from *Watermelon Man* or took a detour into a Latin ballad such as *Meditation*, Clifford was always there, hectoring and cajoling.

CLIVE DAVIS

Right in your faith

Ruth Naomi Floyd
606 Club, Chelsea

AS MIGHT be imagined from the title of her debut recording, *Songs for Desolate Times*, the American gospel singer Ruth Naomi Floyd is a woman with a mission. Seeing contemporary society as plagued by hopelessness and despair, she writes and performs songs whose lyrics either quote Christian scripture directly or roughly paraphrase it. Unusually, however, instead of operating in the musical arena generally associated with gospel singers such as Mahalia Jackson, Floyd is an out-and-out jazz singer.

What does come across immediately from Floyd, all specific messages aside, is an overwhelming desire to communicate. Her first song, *Or Truth?*, inspired by a James Baldwin novel, boasted the somewhat forbidding opening lines: "Judgment without any quality of the real falls short of the absolute, falls short of the truth." Floyd's great strength, though, lies in her ability to inject swing and

passion into the most stubbornly unpromising lyrics and so, driven by her rhythm section — drummer Web Thomas and bassist Jeremy Brown — and pleasingly embellished by the agile alto of Bobby Zankel and Steve Hamilton's sizzling piano, the song became a fastish bustle that easily accommodated the customary round of jazz solos.

More overtly scripture-based lyrics, in

the songs *Seek and Ye Shall Find*, *Reap What You Sow* and *The Last Shall Be First*, received equally jazzy treatment. But it was Duke Ellington's *Come Sunday* that brought out all the strength and subtle beauty in Floyd's voice. The slow, yearning melody highlighted not only her technical gifts — superb dynamic control and flexibility, faultless diction — but also her most important onstage asset: an unmistakable emotional integrity that conveys her music's power even to the most recalcitrant non-believer.

To the large numbers of sceptics in each camp — many of her religious acquaintances are reportedly as hostile to jazz and its perceived decadence as jazz fans are suspicious of organised religion — Floyd says: "Jesus didn't stand up in synagogues. He was right there in the streets, meeting people where they were."

CHRIS PARKER

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament
MOLLY GAISFORD

Age: 23.

Profession: Actress and producer.

Enterprise culture: Dis-mayed at failing to be signed up by London agents in the "cattle market" of their final weeks as drama students last May, Gaisford and fellow LAMDA graduate Justin Trefgarne established their own company, Odyssey Productions.

Debut production: *Blood and Ice*. Liz Lochhead's *Eighties* play about the writing of *Frankenstein*, began a four-week run at the New End Theatre, Hampstead,

last night, with Gaisford and Trefgarne as Mary and Percy Shelley. "The New End is an appropriate setting for the *Frankenstein* story because in the 19th century it was a mortuary. Keats watched post-mortems there."

Famous patron: John Link, the LAMDA tutor who is directing *Blood and Ice*, told the pair they should try to recruit a well-known name to their cause. "I really admire Dame Judi Dench and so we wrote to her. She sent back a letter saying she was impressed by our enthusiasm and would give us her full



support. Having her as patron gave us an edge in getting off the ground."

Shoestring budget: "Every-one involved in *Blood and Ice* is working for nothing — though we are paying for the stage manager's Travelcard." Even with financial

help from several LAMDA council members and the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, they will still have to fill about 40 of the New End's 77 seats every night to cover costs.

Long-term goal? "The initial idea was just to stage one play and get agents to see us and pick us up. But now we want *Odyssey* to give actors a chance to work as soon as they leave drama school, and stage work by unknown writers. We want it to be a hotbed for new talent."

Self-assessment: "I'm not the world's greatest organiser and wouldn't want to give up acting to become a full-time producer. I love trying to be funny but I'm probably more convincing in straight roles."

DANIEL ROSENTHAL

AN EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER

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CHANGING TIMES

Related civil and criminal actions Rights of custody under Convention Caution urged in testing committal case

Regina v Loomister Magistrates Court and Another, Ex parte Aston Manor Brewery Co

Before Lord Justice McCowan and Mr Justice Collins
[Judgment December 19]

When a party was the defendant in related civil and criminal proceedings, it was an abuse of process for those criminal proceedings to continue if the civil proceedings were in effect a prosecution of the criminal proceedings, putting the prosecution in a position where they were unable to exercise independently their duty as prosecutors.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so held in a reserved judgment when allowing an application for judicial review by Aston Manor Brewery Co of the refusal on November 1, 1995, by Loomister Magistrates Court to stay proceedings concerning charges

brought under regulation 13(4) of the Natural Mineral Waters Regulations (SI 1985 No 71) and section 15(1)(b) of the Food Safety Act 1990 brought by Hereford and Worcester County Council, on the ground of abuse of process.

The applicant was a company selling bottled spring water which became subject to civil proceedings brought by another company, who alleged that the applicant represented its water to be connected to water sold by the plaintiff. Later, related criminal proceedings were brought by the council on the plaintiff's complaint.

Counsel instructed by the council to prosecute, was already representing the plaintiff in the civil proceedings, and in that capacity had possession of documents which were also relevant to the criminal proceedings. When the criminal matter came to trial, prosecuting counsel would not

allow the applicant to see these documents on the ground that they were covered by the plaintiff's privilege.

Having heard argument on those issues, the justices adjourned the case sine die, and refused to hear applications from the applicant for disclosure of the documents and for proceedings to be stayed on the ground of abuse of process.

Mr Ian Crossford, QC and Mr Thomas Lowe for the applicants; Mr Timothy Straker, QC and Mr Peter Miller for the council; the justices did not appear and were not represented.

LORD JUSTICE MCCOWAN said that neither prosecuting counsel nor the council had acted improperly, because both had obtained the permission of the plaintiff, through its solicitors, before counsel was instructed.

Whether they had acted wisely was another matter, however.

It should have been appreciated that there would be a conflict of interest if counsel was put in a position where he had a duty as a prosecutor to disclose to the applicant material which the plaintiff would prefer he did not disclose.

When that risk materialised, the plaintiff was in effective control of the question of disclosure and the council were unable to exercise independently their duty as prosecutors.

The integrity of the proceedings had been compromised by that and it was no longer possible for the applicant to have a fair trial.

The application would be allowed and proceedings permanently stayed.

Mr Justice Collins agreed.

Solicitors: Dibb Lupton & Broomfield, Birmingham; Mr R. A. Yates, Worcester.

In re S (a Minor) (Abduction: European Convention)

Before Lord Justice Butler-Sloss, Lord Justice Evans and Sir Iain Glidewell
[Judgment December 18]

"Rights of custody" for the purpose of the European Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions Concerning the Custody of Children 1980 (Cmd 823) so that a parent who had an interim care and control order made in his favour had an order for custody within the scope of both Conventions.

The Court of Appeal so held in allowing an appeal by a father against a decision of Mr L. Swift, QC, sitting as a deputy High Court judge, that neither Convention applied to the case of the applicant's son who had been removed from the jurisdiction.

The court declared that the child had been wrongfully retained, not that he had been wrongfully removed, by his grandmother and aunt contrary to article 3 of the Hague Convention and had been unlawfully removed from the jurisdiction contrary to article 12 of the European Convention.

Miss Judith Parker, QC and Miss Maureen Mulvey for the father; Miss Patricia Scotland, QC and Lord Phillips for the grandmother and aunt.

LORD JUSTICE BUTLER-SLOSS said that the order for interim care and control gave the father rights of custody, albeit that they were on an interim basis and

he shared them with the High Court. He had the right to take the child anywhere within England and Wales and to prevent any other person from removing the child from him without an order of the court.

The child was habitually resident in England at the time of his removal to Ireland and remained so thereafter. The father obtained rights of custody and on being served with the order requiring the return of the child to England the retention by the aunt was wrongful within the meaning of article 3 of the Hague Convention.

There were few decisions in English law on the interpretation of the European Convention. The removal of a child across international frontiers by a person without a legal right to care for him appeared to be unique in the English courts applying the international Conventions.

Looking at the travaux préparatoires of each Convention but particularly the report on the European Convention it was clear that the situation created by the present facts had not been contemplated by the authors.

It had been argued that a person who had been granted care and control under a wardship order did not come within article 1 of the European Convention but the inclusion of wardship in paragraph 3 of Schedule 3 to the Child Abduction and Custody Act 1985, by which a custody order was defined for the purposes of section 27, and which applied to both Conventions, was the answer to that argument.

Solicitors: Fletcher Dervish & Co; Reynolds Porter Chamberlain.

Neill v Director of Public Prosecutions

Before Lord Justice McCowan and Mr Justice Collins
[Judgment December 2]

A solicitor was entitled to request an old style committal for the purpose of testing whether or not an essential witness would attend court, but caution should be exercised in such cases, and action only on the clearest written instructions from the client.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so held when allowing an appeal by way of case stated by Mr Simon Neill, against the decision of Oldham Justices on January 19, 1996 to make a wasted costs order of £142 against him.

Mr Neill, a solicitor whose client was charged with indecent assault, on instructions had requested the committal to hold an old style committal, anticipating that the complainant would not turn up at court. When she did appear with the intention of giving evidence, Mr Neill agreed that a paper committal would be satisfactory and she need not give oral evidence. The justices made a wasted costs order against Mr Neill finding that he had acted unreasonably.

Mr David Taylor for the appellant; Mr Rhodri Price Lewis for respondent.

LORD JUSTICE MCCOWAN said that the appellant learnt from his client that the complainant, who was known to him, might not pursue her complaint. Without the complainant's evidence there was no case at all and the appellant decided to have an old style committal, under section 6(1) of the Magistrates Courts Act 1980, to see

if the complainant gave evidence. It had been said that the appellant should have contacted the prosecutor to investigate the truth of the matter.

His Lordship said that it should not be forgotten that the appellant's duty was to do his best for his client, and the appellant might reasonably be concerned that if the police were warned they might contact the complainant to "firm up" her evidence.

Mr Price Lewis relied on *R v Epping and Herts Justices, Ex parte Mosses* (1973) QB 433. In that case Lord Widgery, Lord Chief Justice, had said that the function of committal proceedings was as a safeguard to ensure that no one stood trial unless a prima facie case had been made out. *Mosses* did not assist. In that case there was evidence other than that of the complainant.

It seemed that the justices did not appreciate that the appellant was seeking a situation where there was no prima facie case against his client. In *Ridehalgh v Horsefield* (1994) Ch 205 the acid test for making a wasted costs order was stated to be whether the conduct in question admitted of a reasonable explanation. Although others might have taken a different course, the appellant's conduct was reasonable.

His Lordship added that in such circumstances solicitors should be very cautious and only act upon the clearest instructions in writing.

The appeal would be allowed and the wasted costs order quashed.

Mr Justice Collins agreed. Solicitors: Arnold & Fen, Coway; Crown Prosecution Service, Abingdon.

Integrity of BBC an issue for decision

Barker v Statesman and Nation Publishing Co Ltd and Others

Before Lord Justice Nourse and Lord Justice Brooke
[Judgment December 5]

Although it was within the discretion of a trial judge to strike out an action for malicious falsehood without hearing any evidence from the plaintiff or his witnesses, it was a most unusual course to take, especially when the integrity of the British Broadcasting Corporation was an issue for decision.

The Court of Appeal so stated in a reserved judgment granting an application by the plaintiff, Mr

Phillip B. Barker, for leave to appeal against a decision by Mr Justice Alton on June 24, 1996, to strike out his action for damages for malicious falsehood against a number of defendants that included the BBC and Mr Duncan Campbell, an investigative journalist.

Mr Barker in person; Mr Desmond Browne, QC and Miss Adrienne Page for the BBC and Mr Campbell.

LORD JUSTICE BROOKE said that the case arose out of the plaintiff's brief connection, in 1989, with Brownings Clinical Pathology Services Ltd, a company that had offered experimental treat-

ment to AIDS sufferers, and a BBC Watchdog programme that suggested unfair pecuniary advantage was being taken of, and false hopes offered to, vulnerable patients.

The plaintiff, shown up in a bad light and believing the defendants were motivated by malice, felt that he had not received justice because the judge took the wholly exceptional course of deciding the issue on the evidential material on which the programme was based without hearing the plaintiff or his many witnesses give evidence.

There was sufficient in the plaintiff's complaints to justify his being granted leave.

Although it was within the

discretion of the judge to make the course he did, if he considered it fair and safe to do so, it was a most unusual course and it did necessitate his relying heavily on the integrity of the BBC and Mr Campbell in relation to transcripts of taped conversations if he was to determine the issue without hearing any oral evidence from the people whose conversations were being secretly taped.

The integrity of the BBC and Mr Campbell was at the heart of one of the issues the judge had to decide. Lord Justice Nourse agreed.

Solicitors: Mr Sarah Jones, Shepherd's Bush.

Substituting verdict

Regina v Peterson

The discretionary power of the Court of Appeal conferred by section 3 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968, under which it "may, instead of allowing or dismissing [an] appeal, substitute for the verdict found by the jury a verdict of guilty of another offence," should be exercised in the light of what would be just in all the circumstances of the procedural and evidential history of the case.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division (Lord Justice Potter, Mr Justice Owen and Judge Martin Tucker, QC) so stated on December 6 when granting Andrew Duncan Peterson leave to appeal and substituting for his conviction on March 31, 1995 at Swansea Crown Court Judge H. V. Williams, QC and a jury of obtaining property by deception, a verdict of guilty of procuring the execution of

a valuable security by deception. The prison sentence of nine months, suspended for one year, was left unaltered.

LORD JUSTICE POTTER said that the trial was one of a number concerning building society mortgage fraud, following *R v Peadar* (The Times July 11, 1996; [1996] 3 WLR 255) and *R v Graham* (The Times October 28, 1996) the original conviction had to be quashed and the prosecution asked for a verdict of guilty of the other offence to be substituted.

It was submitted that because of the grave effect upon the appellant's career, as an act of mitigation or mercy no other verdict should be substituted. Their Lordships could not accede to that. The apparently unlimited discretion of the court was concentrated upon the procedural and evidential history of the case.

Insurer's entitlement

Murphy and Another v Young & Co's Brewery plc and Another

A legal expense insurer was permitted to cap its liability and once the cover had been exhausted it was not always reasonable or just to order the insurer to pay the costs of the adverse successful party regardless of the contractual limit of liability.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Butler-Sloss, Lord Justice Phillips and Sir John Balcombe) so held on November 20 in dismissing an appeal by Young & Co's Brewery plc, the successful defendants to an action, against a decision of Mr Griffiths-Williams, QC, sitting as a deputy High Court judge, rejecting their application for costs against Sun Alliance and London Insurance plc, which had provided legal expenses insurance to the plaintiffs.

LORD JUSTICE PHILLIPS said that he was not persuaded that it would always be appropriate to order liability insurers to pay a plaintiff's costs where they had unsuccessfully defended a claim made against their insured if the result of such an order would be to render them liable beyond their contractual limit of cover.

The appropriate order might well turn on the facts.

Sun Alliance had funded the plaintiffs' litigation under a commercial agreement but that was the only ground that could validly be advanced in support of the contention that they should be ordered to pay Young's costs. In particular, they had no interest in the result; did not initiate the litigation; exercised no control over the conduct; and could not be accused of "wanting and officious intermeddling" in the dispute.

Bankrupt entitled to instruct solicitor

Nelson v Nelson and Others

Before Lord Justice McCowan, Lord Justice Peter Gibson and Lord Justice Waller
[Judgment December 6]

A solicitor who unknowingly represented an undischarged bankrupt in commencing proceedings relating to his property had authority to do so, as he was acting in the interests of the bankrupt and accordingly the solicitor was not liable for costs thereby incurred.

The Court of Appeal so held when allowing an appeal by Aslam Heath, a former firm of

solicitors, against the decision of Judge Marr-Johnson sitting as a judge of the High Court on May 16, 1995 whereby he ordered under the inherent jurisdiction of the court that the appellants pay the costs of an application for a Mareva injunction including the costs of two hearings.

The appellants had been instructed by Mr Nelson to take all appropriate steps to protect his property.

The appellant so acted entirely in ignorance of the fact that Mr Nelson was, as it later transpired, an undischarged bankrupt.

Mr Guy Mansfield, QC, for the

appellants; Mr Richard Evans for the third respondent.

LORD JUSTICE MCCOWAN said that a bankrupt was entitled to bring any action except one relating to his property. That meant that he had capacity and authority to retain solicitors.

A solicitor, as the appellant contended, who lent his name to the commencement of proceedings thereby said that he had a client, that the client bore the name of the party to the proceedings and that that client had authorised the proceedings.

He did not represent that the client had a good cause of action.

In commencing the proceedings, therefore, the appellant had had authority to do so and warranted no more than that.

Accordingly any discretion exercised by the judge should have been exercised in favour of the appellants.

Solicitors: Barlow Lyde & Gilbert; H. Omar & Co, Battersea.

Correction

In *Johnson v HM Prison Service and Others* (The Times December 3, 1996) the solicitor for the complainant was Ms Penelope Grant, Victoria.

Court of Appeal

Drugs confiscation orders

Regina v Clark (Paul John) Regina v Benham (John Preston)

Before Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice, Mr Justice Sachs and Mr Justice Toulson
[Judgment December 5]

Guidance on confiscation orders was given by the Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, when refusing two renewed applications for leave to appeal against sentence and orders under the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986.

John Preston Benham had enlisted Paul John Clark and a friend, Watkins, to assist in a conspiracy over a period of 10 months to produce amphetamine in the value of £18 million.

Both applicants had entered guilty pleas and following inquiries into the amount of their assets they were sentenced on July 16, 1995. Benham was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment and Clark to seven.

Additionally, a confiscation order of £3,199,599 was made against Benham and he was ordered to serve 10 years in default of payment. A confiscation order of £53,000 was made against Clark and he was ordered to serve two years in default.

Mr James Curtis, QC, for the Crown; Mr James Turner for Clark; Mr R. Alan Jones, QC, for Benham.

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE said that there were difficulties in establishing whether any goods were the product of drug trafficking. Accordingly the Act contained an unusual statutory presumption (in section 2) on which the court could rely in arriving at a decision. That prior assumption could be rebutted by a defendant.

The effect and meaning of the Act as summarised by Lord Lane, Lord Chief Justice, in *R v Dickens* (1994) 2 QB 102 was accepted by all as correct.

The first question the court had to ask was: whether the defendant appeared to be sentenced for a drug trafficking offence (section 11). The second was whether the defendant had benefited from drug trafficking (section 12).

That had to be considered in the light of sections 11 and 20. In answering that, the court was not bound to make the statutory assumptions in section 2(3).

The circumstances in which a court might exercise its discretion had been addressed by Lord Justice Bingham in *R v Redburn* (1992) 1 WLR 1882. His Lordship said that the criticism of that view in *R v Rose* (1993) 1 WLR 834 appeared to be based on a misunderstanding of what Lord Justice Bingham had said.

Having considered the words of Lord Justice Alton in *R v Khan* (unreported), CA, February 26,

1996, his Lordship stated that whether or not a defendant could be said to have benefited from the proceeds of drug trafficking when it was reasonable to do so.

If the court made the statutory assumptions in section 2(3)(a) and (b) the next stage involved two questions:

First, did the property appear to have been held by the defendant since conviction or since the beginning of the six-year period for the making of the statutory assumptions?

Second, had any expenditure since the beginning of the six-year period been met out of payments made by the defendant?

The court could make use of prima facie evidence in answering those two questions. The first stage, if the court made the statutory assumptions, was to ask whether any payment made by the defendant was a reward from drug trafficking.

Whether the court applied the presumption or relied on evidence or both, where the defendant had benefited from drug trafficking the next question would be what the value of the drug trafficking was (sections 23(4)(a) and 23).

Once it was clear what amount was to be recovered, under sections 14, 4 and 5, the court was obliged to make an order in that amount under section 16(4).

It was open to the defendant to return to the court if the realisable property was inadequate for the amount to be recovered under section 4(1).

In the present case, his Lordship said that it was clear beyond argument that the trial judge had made the proper assumptions. The applicants had failed to show that they had had any significant source of income other than from drug trafficking. It was therefore entirely appropriate for the judge to make the orders he had made.

Both applicants had appealed against the length of the terms of imprisonment imposed in default of payment. His Lordship referred to *R v Scrafton* (1994) 15 Cr App R (S) 521. The question a judge had to ask was what period, not counting any previous sentence, was necessary in order to pay the amount ordered.

The court would take into account the fact that the larger the sum of money involved the greater would be the incentive on the defendant to opt for a prison sentence to avoid payment. Where there was a lack of assets the court would vary the order. Here, there was no basis for holding that the terms imposed were longer than was necessary.

Solicitors: Crown Prosecution Service, Headquarters; Berry & Berry, Tunbridge.

Underwriters cannot avoid liability

Layher Ltd v Lowe and Others

Before Lord Justice Nourse, Lord Justice Saville and Lord Justice Brooke
[Judgment December 17]

Underwriters relying on the standard terms of their claims procedure could not repudiate liability for indemnifying the insured for costs incurred in defending itself in litigation arising out of an accident during repair work carried out to Uppark House.

The requirement that the insured give immediate notice of any occurrence likely to give rise to a claim did not arise, there being no more than a possibility in the immediate aftermath of the accident that a claim would be made against the insured.

The Court of Appeal so held dismissing an appeal by Mr David Lowe, representing himself and the other underwriters of Lloyd's syndicate 657, from the judgment of Judge Thorpe, QC, sitting as a judge of the Queen's Bench Division on official receiver's business,

on May 5, 1995, upholding the claim of the plaintiff, Layher Ltd, that it was entitled under its policy to be indemnified for the costs of litigation it had incurred.

Mr Richard Mawrey, QC, for the underwriters; Mr John Blackburn, QC and Mr Andrew Goddard for the plaintiff.

LORD JUSTICE SAVILLE said that in 1989 a temporary roof was erected on scaffolding over Uppark House in Sussex, a National Trust property, in order to facilitate repairs to fire damage. In January 1990 a storm blew off that roof. Two workmen died and there was substantial damage.

Two years later, the National Trust had brought proceedings against the scaffolding contractors. The plaintiff had supplied compensation to the contractors for the falling of the roof and it was in due course joined as a party to the litigation. The proceedings were compromised after the trial had started but the plaintiff advanced a claim under its insurance for its costs which under the compromise

it bore itself. By condition 13 of the standard Lloyd's Commercial, Industrial and Contractors Combined Liability Insurance an assured "shall give immediate notice in writing with full particulars of a happening of any occurrence likely to give rise to a claim."

The underwriters had repudiated liability for the claim on the ground that the incident itself was an "occurrence likely to give rise to a claim" and the plaintiff had given no immediate notice of that occurrence so that there was no liability under the insurance.

The question was whether, looking at the matter objectively, assuming in favour of the underwriters that that was what one had to do, there was an occurrence likely to give rise to a claim under the certificate of insurance.

The occurrence on which the underwriters relied was the incident of January 1990. Since condition 13 required immediate notice to be given, it seemed to follow that the question had to be answered by reference to the state

of affairs as it existed immediately after the incident.

Mr Mawrey accepted, correctly, that "likely" meant at least a 50 per cent chance of a claim being made. What he was unable to do was to show that a claim was likely.

The plaintiff had not designed the scaffolding or the roof but had merely supplied components including securing wedges. Nothing suggested that the incident had resulted from any fault in the scaffolding or the roof.

Accepting that in this litigation age it might be said, at the time in question, that a claim was possible by the National Trust or the contractors by way of seeking to pass on the claim made on them or indeed by others. But the condition used the expression "likely" not "possible". It could not be said that the underwriters had brought themselves within the wording of condition 13.

Lord Justice Nourse and Lord Justice Brooke agreed.

Solicitors: Lloyd's Cooper; Timmus Salter Dechert.

Limit to effect of assignment clause

Flood v Shand Construction Ltd and Others

Before Lord Justice Butler-Sloss, Lord Justice Evans and Sir Iain Glidewell
[Judgment December 19]

A provision in a clause preventing the assignment of the benefit of a sub-contract allowing the assignment without consent of "any sum which is or may become due and payable to him under this sub-contract" did not operate to allow the assignment of the right to take whatever preliminary steps were necessary to establish that a particular quantified sum was due and payable but only the assignment of the right to recover sums which were established to be due.

The Court of Appeal so held in allowing an appeal by the defendants, Shand Construction Ltd, Morrison Shand Construction Ltd and Morrison Construction Ltd, from a decision of Judge Thornton, sitting as an official referee, allowing the substitution of David Charles Flood as plaintiff in place of Floods of Queensberry Ltd, the sub-contractors.

Mr Colin Reese, QC and Ms Chantal-Amice Derriens for the appellant; Mr John Power, QC

and Mr Andrew Stafford for the respondent.

LORD JUSTICE EVANS said that "sum" in the proviso meant a fixed or liquidated amount. The amount either "is" due and payable at the time of the assignment, in which case there was an existing claim in debt, or "may become due" and payable at some future date. In that case the assignment was of the future anticipated right to claim that amount as a debt.

If there was a claim for additional remuneration as in *Leadbale v Lenn Realisation Ltd* (1996) 47 Con LR 11 that right could not be assigned, but there could be an assignment of the future right to

recover the sum awarded by an arbitrator or a judgment debt.

Similarly, a claim for damages could not be assigned until such time as the amount was fixed and there was a finding of an admission that the sum was due. Again the clause permitted the assignment of the future right to recover that amount.

That interpretation of the proviso was entirely consistent with the commercial purpose of the clause.

The contractor as the responding party might be indifferent to the prospect of having to pay a particular sum to a third party assignee when it became due and

payable, but it could be important to him that he should operate the contractual machinery, or arbitrate or litigate, only with the party with whom he had chosen to contract.

The nature and scope of the proceedings might be the same whether or not they were conducted by the sub-contractor, but the chances of settlement or of agreeing particular issues could be affected by the identity of the other party.

Sir Iain Glidewell delivered a concurring judgment and Lord Justice Butler-Sloss agreed.

Solicitors: Morrison Skirrow; Winward Fearon & Co.

Pursuing deceased's appeal

Regina v W (Crime: Pursuing deceased's appeal)

A widow seeking to clear the stigma from the name of her deceased husband, who had appealed against conviction of an indecent assault on his daughter, was entitled to pursue the appeal under section 44A of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968, inserted by section 7(1) of the Criminal Appeal Act 1995.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division (Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice, Mr Justice Sachs and Mr Justice Toulson) so held on December 17 when granting what was believed to be the first such application under section 44A but dismissing the appeal on the merits.

The deceased died aged 46 from natural causes in 1991. He had been sentenced to 18 months imprisonment by Judge Hopkin after conviction at Nottingham

Crown Court (Mr Recorder Metcalfe and a jury).

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE said that, had their Lordships been persuaded that the conviction was unsafe, they would have owed a duty in the cause of truth and justice to rule and that duty was unaffected by the death of the deceased in such a case, where only the intervention of death had prevented the defendant himself from pursuing his appeal.

Scots Law Report January 8 1997 Outer House

Rejection

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The newly appointed Head of Marketing of this global financial products organisation require a top Executive Secretary to support his worldwide strategic marketing activities. Your tact and diplomacy allied with your expert IT skills on all aspects of Microsoft Office will enable you to prioritise a heavy workload in a constantly changing and innovative environment. The successful candidate will have the business acumen and initiative to resolve issues independently and the ability to analyse and interpret strategic information as part of a challenging and varied support role.

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The successful candidate would display the highest level of commitment and dedication (including flexible hours), common sense, attention to detail, dynamism, team work and a good sense of humour. Fast (70 wpm) accurate typing, 110 wpm shorthand, advanced W4W 6.0, intermediate Powerpoint and Excel, highly developed communication skills coupled with an excellent command of both the English and French languages.

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Please send your application, including a detailed biography and compensation requirements to Personnel, Ref: Corporate Finance PA, Smith Barney Europe, Ltd., 10 Piccadilly, London W1V 0LH.

Applications will be maintained in the strictest confidence. No Agencies please.

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As a highly experienced and flexible PA you will be required to take responsibility for document production and control, diary planning and travel arrangements.

Applicants must have five years relevant experience as a PA or Secretary to a Board level Executive in a confidential and demanding environment. It is essential that you are a proficient audio and copy typist who possesses a typing qualification to RSA level III and 120 wpm Shorthand. Possession of an appropriate Secretarial Qualification is also desirable. Experience of working with Word for Windows and Excel packages would be advantageous.

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Write or phone for an application form for, either post, to be returned by 24 January 1997

Head of Personnel, English Partnerships, St George's House, Kingsway, Team Valley, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear NE11 0NA. Tel: 0191-497 7572/1/0

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This is a demanding appointment and is not for the faint-hearted! If you are looking for an exciting challenge in a high profile charity, please write for an application pack to:

Karen Hodge, HR Manager, The Prince's Trust - Volunteers, 18 Park Square East, London NW1 4AL (Tel: 021 745 1120, Fax: 021 745 1167). The closing date is Friday 24 January 1997.

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To succeed you will need proven supervisory ability coupled with sound interpersonal and organisational skills. Previous secretarial experience of a senior level is essential and computer literacy would be a distinct advantage.

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You must have proven secretarial skills, good organisational ability and a methodical approach to work. Experience of Word for Windows 6.0 is essential, as is familiarity with databases and statistical packages. Experience of working on Access or Excel, although not essential, is highly advantageous.

For an application pack, please write, stating which post you are applying for, to: Noosh Mason, Personnel Department, London Ambulance Service NHS Trust, 220 Watney Road, London SE1 8SD. Closing date for receipt of application forms is 22 January 1997.

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If you have excellent book skills, shorthand, typing, MS Office, together with the initiative, drive and ambition to develop a good PA, please contact me. Personal experience is essential and ideally you will live locally.

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Small Friendly Co
£20,000 + benefits

Successful international company seeks a professional Sec/PA to assist a director and his team of analysts. Based in the heart of the West End, liaise with overseas offices, prepare presentations, expense claims, arrange travel and keep the office running smoothly. If you are a flexible, friendly character, can prioritise, have 60wpm typing and good wordprocessing skills. Please call Andrea Marrell.

High Energy!
£20,000

Experienced PA/Office Manager sought to assist President of Int'l commodity traders. As part of a small team, you must be proactive, committed and organised, dealing with travel itineraries, personnel issues and ad-hoc projects. A strong personality, eye for detail, sense of humour and ability to work without supervision could secure this job for you. Please call Lucy Thomas.

Telephone: 0171-390 7000 Fax: 0171-390 2997

Crone Corkill
Recruitment Consultants

Telephone: 0171-434 4512 Fax: 0171-437 9239

Crone Corkill
Recruitment Consultants

NEW YEAR SENSATIONS
to £30,000

28K - INFLUENTIAL CHAIRMAN - Experienced PA Sec

25K - ORGANISING - ex PA to MD

24K - CHELSEA HARBOR - PA

23K - CAREER OPPORTUNITY

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18K - BLOANE SQUARE

13K - CHILDREN'S CHARITY

12K - FAMOUS MUSEUM

KNIGHTSBRIDGE SECRETARIES
0171 468 0400

Good Organiser
£21,000 + Overtime

Responsible for supporting the head of department within this multinational firm. As the managing partner, your boss has an extremely demanding schedule, which means your role will involve anticipating his needs, prioritising his workload and ensuring the departmental secretaries are effectively supporting the partner & consultants within the team. You will be an excellent time manager, proactive, perceptive & professional. 50wpm typing.

0171-831-1220

Market Research Assistant
£18,000

Your role as assistant to the marketing director of this major financial services company will involve gathering, analysing & presenting financial market data, both verbally & in report form, organising & publishing newsletters & brochures and extensive liaison with commercial management. This is a unique opportunity for a graduate with at least two years business experience, gained in a financial or research environment. Keyboard skills & knowledge of Microsoft essential.

0171-831-1220

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Crone Corkill
Temporary Recruitment

TRADING FLOOR PA
£25,000 PACKAGE

An exciting opportunity has arisen within this Investment Bank for a PA with banking experience to work for the Head of Sales. The position will incorporate extensive client contact, meeting co-ordination and general secretarial and administrative back-up. Age 25-30.

Please contact Melinda Marks
Jonathan Wren & Co Ltd,
No.1 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
Tel: 0171 623 1266 Fax: 0171 626 1242

CITY SLICKERS

INVESTMENT PA £21,000 + FRP + BENS
Working for two senior Directors in the Research Division of this City based organisation. Duties involve preparing presentations, organising meetings and client liaison. MS Office essential.

TEAM SECRETARY £19,000 + MS + BENS
Co-ordinate busy diaries, organise travel arrangements and provide secretarial back-up within a dynamic W1 Bank. MS Office required.

Contact Melinda Marks or Margaret Sorohan
Jonathan Wren & Co Ltd,
No.1 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
Tel: 0171 623 1266 Fax: 0171 626 1242

FRENCH SECRETARIES x 3
to £20,000 + MS + OT

Due to the expansion of this Corporate Finance department, secretaries are required to work for teams of Executives. The roles will incorporate presentation typing, diary management and using your fluent French.

We have just launched a Bi-lingual section and this is just one of many opportunities we have at present.

Please contact Julie Manasson
Jonathan Wren & Co Ltd,
No.1 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
Tel: 0171 623 1266 Fax: 0171 626 1242

DYNAMIC PA
to £20,000 + MS + OT

An excellent opportunity to work for the Managing Director of the Derivatives division of a major International Bank. This is a true PA role which requires organisational flair and a high level of initiative. Secretarial experience at senior level including shorthand and 'A' level education required.

Please contact Margaret Sorohan.
Jonathan Wren & Co Ltd,
No.1 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
Tel: 0171 623 1266 Fax: 0171 626 1242

MAINE-TUCKER
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TOP PA - NO SHORTHAND REQUIRED!
£225k + bonus + full pkg + mort sub + pens/med/gym

New York, New Canada, New Brazil... Work 1:1 for this very powerful MD who has responsibility for the internal management of this huge banking empire. Based in the West End. Drive your own car and control the admin for HR/training and legal depts as well as provide complete support for your boss. Totally dedicated to him, you will have your own responsibilities with a high admin content so senior exp is a definite but a finance background is not essential. You must be late 20's and ready for this amazing job with this major player!

18-21 Jersey Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6HP
Telephone: 0171 734 7341 Facsimile: 0171 734 3260

PA TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE
INTERNATIONAL PROJECT FINANCE
Age 30-35
£30,000+ package (inc overtime + bonus)

The office is high-powered, small (6 executives), located in Victoria, and primarily developing major projects, particularly in Asia.

The position combines heavy and sophisticated word processing and presentations, dealing with different cultures, and the full range of PA functions including complex travel arrangements. There is pressure, demands and tight deadlines across time zones, a 47 hour week plus some late evening and weekend work.

Candidates must have first class W4W6 and shorthand skills (60/100), A levels, be highly computer literate with Powerpoint experience, have relevant large and small company experience, and be a team player with energy, commitment and flexibility.

Please fax letter, demonstrating how these requirements are met, and full CV including present salary to Mr R Mathrani, Vanguard Capital on 0171 584 8595.

PA/SECRETARY
CIRCA £30,000
LONDON

Required by chief executive of paper distribution company (400 yds from Waterloo Stn) modern offices, young cheerful staff and most progressive company. (location in three months time).

Demanding job with plenty of scope for developing skills. Must have excellent shorthand and W.P. skills, and be prepared to work hard for top salary (circa £30,000 p.a.). Preferably over 30's only, who are prepared to demonstrate organisational skills and support busy chief executive.

Early appointment is essential (to start Feb 3). Interviews before January 17th 1997. Write giving full CV to Fax No. 0171 928 8415.

NEW YEAR NEW JOB
Secretary to Director

Large W1/2nd office for a busy executive. You should have excellent shorthand skills, MS Word or similar and be a team player. You will be responsible for the day to day running of the office, including travel arrangements, diary management and general secretarial duties. Salary c £28k + 5% pension, lunch & private health. Excellent CV work prospects.

Call Alex Ward on 0171 377 6222 x 229, Ref 1120.

RECEPTIONIST / SECRETARY

Seeking for SW1 based office of small private company. Role of receptionist and secretary. You should have excellent shorthand skills, MS Word or similar and be a team player. You will be responsible for the day to day running of the office, including travel arrangements, diary management and general secretarial duties. Salary c £28k + 5% pension, lunch & private health. Excellent CV work prospects.

Call Alex Ward on 0171 377 6222 x 229, Ref 1120.

SECRETARY-DOCKLANDS
Ref 1154

Presenting looking for a PA to support a busy executive. You should have excellent shorthand skills, MS Word or similar and be a team player. You will be responsible for the day to day running of the office, including travel arrangements, diary management and general secretarial duties. Salary c £28k + 5% pension, lunch & private health. Excellent CV work prospects.

Call Alex Ward on 0171 377 6222 x 229, Ref 1120.

MAINE-TUCKER
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

Top European Training Co
Admin/Marketing Assistant - up to £16,000

If you'd like to work with some exciting names in the world of PR and Publishing, read on! This young vibrant team need an enthusiastic, committed and proactive admin to help organise and plan courses and liaise with delegates and trainers as well as sort out all the busy admin. Get involved with marketing strategy and use your own ideas and style. You must have some office experience (21 years and good typing (55 wpm) on W4W. If you're keen and want to get on, the package is excellent so call us immediately to find out more.

18-21 Jersey Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6HP
Telephone: 0171 734 7341 Facsimile: 0171 734 3260

FOXTONS

Start the New Year with a fresh challenge and join Foxtons. London's most progressive estate agent. We are expanding our new offices in 1997, with many opportunities for talented sales and admin staff who are looking to develop their career path. If you would like to apply for one of the positions listed below please email 0171 353 5533. All calls will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

SENIOR NEGOTIATORS
Opportunities exist for top quality sales negotiators. Excellent training with the latest technology. Call 0171 353 5533 to find out more about this position and see how quality your career can advance. OVE £30k - £40k.

TEAM SECRETARY
Could you be the person who enjoys dealing with people, answering a busy telephone, and being involved with the general running of a busy secretarial office? Set up to £25k.

BUSINESS CENTRE SECRETARY
London's Air Dem office with a variety of public and private clients. Opportunity to work with a team of professional secretaries and support staff. Excellent training and development opportunities. Set up to £25k.

TRAINING NEGOTIATORS
Opportunity to work with a team of sales negotiators. Excellent training with the latest technology. Call 0171 353 5533 to find out more about this position and see how quality your career can advance. OVE £30k - £40k.

RECEPTIONIST
A position for someone who enjoys dealing with people, answering a busy telephone, and being involved with the general running of a busy secretarial office. Set up to £25k.

TO APPLY PLEASE CONTACT TEL:
0171 353 5533

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL - LONDON SW12
PA/SECRETARY TO HEADMISTRESS

The Headmistress of one of Wandsworth's leading schools, requires a capable, highly organized PA/Secretary to be in charge of all aspects of the school's day to day running. The successful applicant will be responsible for her busy professional and domestic schedule. Confidence, discretion and the ability to deal with people of all ages are essential, as are excellent secretarial skills. The successful applicant will be required to work largely on their own initiative. This position is more likely to suit those over 25 years of age. A good salary and excellent benefits are among the benefits of this demanding job.

Please write in confidence to:
The Headmistress, 74 Nightingale Lane, London SW12 8NR enclosing your CV or tel: 0181 873 1818

NEW YEAR NEW JOB
Secretary to Director

Large W1/2nd office for a busy executive. You should have excellent shorthand skills, MS Word or similar and be a team player. You will be responsible for the day to day running of the office, including travel arrangements, diary management and general secretarial duties. Salary c £28k + 5% pension, lunch & private health. Excellent CV work prospects.

Call Alex Ward on 0171 377 6222 x 229, Ref 1120.

RECEPTIONIST / SECRETARY

Seeking for SW1 based office of small private company. Role of receptionist and secretary. You should have excellent shorthand skills, MS Word or similar and be a team player. You will be responsible for the day to day running of the office, including travel arrangements, diary management and general secretarial duties. Salary c £28k + 5% pension, lunch & private health. Excellent CV work prospects.

Call Alex Ward on 0171 377 6222 x 229, Ref 1120.

SECRETARY-DOCKLANDS
Ref 1154

Presenting looking for a PA to support a busy executive. You should have excellent shorthand skills, MS Word or similar and be a team player. You will be responsible for the day to day running of the office, including travel arrangements, diary management and general secretarial duties. Salary c £28k + 5% pension, lunch & private health. Excellent CV work prospects.

Call Alex Ward on 0171 377 6222 x 229, Ref 1120.

MAINE-TUCKER
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

Poise, Polish and a Perfect PA?
£18,500 + med + bonus + p/p

This exceptional opportunity, based in a very busy Georgian house in W2, offers a real challenge to a confident, proactive, and highly organized PA. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day to day running of the office, including travel arrangements, diary management and general secretarial duties. Salary c £28k + 5% pension, lunch & private health. Excellent CV work prospects.

Call Alex Ward on 0171 377 6222 x 229, Ref 1120.

BLANDINGS
BRITAIN'S MOST EXCLUSIVE HOLIDAY RENTAL AGENCY
CASTLES AND COUNTRY HOUSES OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY THROUGHOUT THE UK

GENERAL MANAGER DESIGNATE
A dynamic person is sought to take overall management responsibility for our Cambridge or Brighton office. The successful applicant will require a degree in business or a similar qualification and will be responsible for the day to day running of the office, including travel arrangements, diary management and general secretarial duties. Salary c £28k + 5% pension, lunch & private health. Excellent CV work prospects.

Call Alex Ward on 0171 377 6222 x 229, Ref 1120.

NEW YEAR NEW JOB
Secretary to Director

Large W1/2nd office for a busy executive. You should have excellent shorthand skills, MS Word or similar and be a team player. You will be responsible for the day to day running of the office, including travel arrangements, diary management and general secretarial duties. Salary c £28k + 5% pension, lunch & private health. Excellent CV work prospects.

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Call Alex Ward on 0171 377 6222 x 229, Ref 1120.

MAINE-TUCKER
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

45 yrs+ and raring to go?
£24,000 + non-contrib pens/STL/free lunch

This is for your experience that you want, a position as a senior admin. You will be responsible for the day to day running of the office, including travel arrangements, diary management and general secretarial duties. Salary c £28k + 5% pension, lunch & private health. Excellent CV work prospects.

Call Alex Ward on 0171 377 6222 x 229, Ref 1120.

MAINE-TUCKER
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Facilities/Office Manager
To £25,000 + Bens

Medium sized Co. in WC1 Computer Iterate Manager with specific roles. A refurb exp, maintenance of office equipment, supplier negotiation, and crisis management. Insight Recruitment, 59 Shelton Street, WC2H 9HE. Tel: 0171 379 5179 Fax: 0171 379 5179.

Tel: 0171 680 6806

La Crème de la Crème

Fax: 0171 782 7586

LEGAL
£23-25,000

We have several interesting legal support roles in a large blue chip company. You will need PA skills and either a legal qualification or background. Own projects including research, drafting agreements and simple litigation. Graduate calibre. 50wpm typing and windows literate. For further information please telephone 0171 495 2321.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTSTRADING FLOOR
£18,700 p/kg

+ 24 days hol, bonus, gym etc. American corporation operating worldwide offer superb opportunity to a motivated 2nd jobber. Good organisational skills and team attitude essential for this fast paced environment. 55wpm typing and good windows. For further information please telephone 0171 495 2321.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTSVICTORIA
£16,500

+ bonus, 25 days hol, BUPA, pension and gym. International consultancy in state of the art offices need a bright, proactive secretary. Career move involving co-ordination of recruitment and organisation of busy team. 55wpm typing and windows experience. For further information please telephone 0171 495 2321.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTSGRADUATE
£25,000++

Interesting opportunity for a career minded professional to work as an Executive Assistant to the Chairman of this international company. You will organise his business life and carry out your own responsibilities and projects. For further information please telephone 0171 628 9529.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTSPRIVATE PA
£30,000

A unique role has arisen to join an international city company as PA to the MD. Full responsibility, including personal matters, will be given in return for flexibility and professionalism. 80wpm shorthand minimum. For further information please telephone 0171 628 9529.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS£21k
+ Bkg BensHIGH
ENERGY

Superb opportunity for a dynamic secretary to join this prestigious Investment Bank. Organising complex travel itineraries and high level meetings, you will also compose correspondence and co-ordinate diaries. A varied front line role which can sometimes be pressurised, your hard work and flexibility will be rewarded with excellent benefits. If you have proven secretarial skills and plenty of energy and drive, call us now to hear more!

0171 225 1888

VICTORIA WALL ASSOCIATES

£19k
+ O/T + BensLIVELY
LINGUISTS

This is an opportunity for high calibre secretaries with a fluency in FRENCH, GERMAN or ITALIAN to work within the dynamic, fast-moving world of investment banking. Supporting a team, you will be a true lynch pin as you organise meetings and travel, prepare presentations and use your language skills daily for extensive client liaison. If you have excellent WP and typing skills and a confident, outgoing personality, call now to reap the rewards of paid overtime, bonus, mortgage subsidy, pension, healthcare and STL.

0171 225 1888

VICTORIA WALL ASSOCIATES

£20k
+ BonusAN 'EXCITING'
OPPORTUNITY!

We are looking for a truly energetic and bright graduate Secretary who wants to learn and develop their skills. Working in London as PA to the MD of a dynamic US based media company, your role will encompass everything from setting up a new office to establishing contacts all over Europe. This is an extremely fast moving business and you will be expected to use your initiative when organising travel, meetings, marketing activities and events. A team orientated person who can react to change and has a genuine interest in the internet is a must, along with 2 years secretarial and computer experience. Languages and internet knowledge are an advantage.

0171 225 1888

VICTORIA WALL ASSOCIATES

young
&
professional

PA to Deputy MD - £25,000

GORDON-YATES

A position for recruitment

The company: World-class money brokers, based in brilliant Liverpool Street location.

The role: One-to-one, working for a young, down to earth, 'great to work for' boss; all usual Sec/PA duties, inc. diary, travel, VIP client liaison etc.

The essentials: Good quality work experience, career commitment, excellent W4W, Excel, Powerpoint skills.

Interested? Call 0171-484 4466, let's talk.

grow
into
an
admin
role

to £20,000

GORDON-YATES

A position for recruitment

The company: UK representative office of leading Scandinavian natural resources company.

The role: Multi-faceted, taking responsibility for reception as well as office admin and secretarial support, within a small, high quality office environment.

The essentials: Secretarial skills and experience; good people skills; strong WP and spreadsheet skills.

Find out more. Call 0171-484 4466, let's talk.

CAPABLE P.A.

Wanted to look after small office and two partners in P.R. & Marketing business. Organisational skills, friendly personality & ability to work under pressure essential. W.I.

Please Reply to Box No 2979

PA IN
CHELSEA

£17,000 p.a.

We need a bright, motivated 2nd jobber who wants a real PA role with responsibility and a varied work load. Lots of involvement, in a young and lively environment if you are early 20's and eager for a new challenge, call us now.

JOYCE GUILFORD

0171 389 8801

RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

SENIOR DTP SECRETARY
TO INVESTMENT DIRECTOR
£20,000 + TOP BENEFITS

A totally professional, proactive Senior Secretary 26+ with strong DTP skills is sought for a new Investment Director/Manager who is looking for the fullest secretarial and admin support. Varied duties include high quality DTP work, presentations containing graphics on Excel, good Windows experience and Powerpoint, extensive diary and travel organising. Experience of investment or other financial companies very advantageous. This is a great role with a top W1 company who can offer excellent benefits and is really a first class career move. Please call Sandy or fax CV to

Rainbow House
12 South Molton Street, London W1Y 1DF
Tel: 0171 491 7252 Fax: 0171 491 2887

PA/BI-LINGUAL SECRETARY
TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE
£20,000

Top profile company is seeking a professional, polished, mature PA with fluent French and rusty shorthand to assist a very busy Chief Executive. Varied job including client contact, arranging travel itineraries, diary management and usual daily secretarial duties. This is a role which is challenging, exciting and totally fulfilling. Please call Elaine or fax CV to

Rainbow House
12 South Molton Street, London W1Y 1DF
Tel: 0171 491 7252 Fax: 0171 491 2887

RITZY RECEPTIONIST -
£18,000

Young & trendy Receptionist in a busy, lively office near the Harbour Club in SW6, requires an experienced and exceptionally well presented person for their reception and 'glitzing' correspondence & reports received from consultants abroad. You will work closely with two other secretaries in managing the office, covering the receptionist and typing & dispatching quarterly client reports. If successful, you will join a young, social company that believes in team work. Previous City/financial experience an advantage. 80wpm typing.

NORMA SKEMP REC LTD
0171 222 5091

THE V.I.P.'S - £18,000

The US property investment corporation based in stunning Highgate offices welcome a really PA to join their small, friendly team assisting at visiting V.I.P.'s & working at the office. Socially aware with flexibility & excellent skills including 50 wpm. Age 25-30.

LEADER OF THE PACK -
£25,000 + BONUS

Dynamic, confident & energetic secretary with 10 years' experience in a fast-paced environment. This demanding position offers a superb challenge for a graduate calibre PA with a flair for admin & personal matters. Typing 60wpm age 25-30.

NORMA SKEMP REC LTD
0171 222 5091

MONUMENT
FRENCH SPEAKING PA'S

To £19,500 + Bonus
Investment Bank

EC2 bank req 3 organised, self-motivated PA's to support 2-3 Corp Fin Executives. Fluent spoken French & English is essential. Full role - world-wide travel, diaries, presentations etc. Ability to produce fast, accurate work under pressure & 1st class liaison skills. Suitable for well educated PA's with up to 2 yrs sec exp. or A' Level sec college leaver.

FORUM HOUSE 15-15 LIME
STREET EC3M 7AP
TEL 0171 929 1281
FAX 0171 621 0985

Personal Assistant
to Financial
Director
£18,000

Manpower is the leading employment services company. We are committed to employing and supplying the very best people.

We are looking for a confident, flexible PA with strong secretarial and communication skills to support our Financial Director. You will have gained excellent secretarial skills from your previous experience of working at a senior level within a quality driven environment and remain calm and organised in the most demanding of circumstances. You will be articulate, numerate and a natural communicator.

The ability to use W4W, Excel, E Mail and prioritise work is necessary to support the Director in this fast-paced and dynamic position. We offer an excellent package and our commitment to your personal development. To apply please write to Penny Mobbs at Manpower PLC, 1 Hereward Place, London W1R 9HA.

MANPOWER
There's more for you

Secretary/Administrator

WEST END - TO £24K

We are a well respected, expanding executive recruitment and human resource consultancy. An enthusiastic, self-motivated and mature individual is needed to support two Senior Consultants. This busy, varied role will involve extensive client contact and plenty of opportunity to use initiative. You will need 80 wpm, Word for Windows and an excellent telephone manner as well as good organisation and team working skills. Please write enclosing your CV to Caroline Edhouse at Digby Morgan Consulting, London House, 53-54 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4RP. Tel: 0171 321 0640.

McKINLAY LAW PARTNERSHIP

SECRETARIES/Administrators
£18,000 - £21,000

Personnel £20K - Prestigious city law firm need a P.A. to a young personal Officer who recruits solicitors. Excellent w.p. skills and a professional telephone manner essential. P.A./Admin £21K - A small U.S. law firm need a P.A./Office administrator to run their office. Lots of admin and some figurework. Marketing P.A. £18K - Prestigious city law firm seeks dynamic graduate P.A. to assist their Marketing/P.R. Manager. Excellent prospects. Call 0171 930 6060

MORE THAN JUST A SECRETARY?
COLLEGE LEAVERS AND 2ND JOBBERS TO £20,000

A Superb role
Charity
This is a true PA role for someone looking for scope and involvement in this prestigious charity. Working at a right hand man to the Managing Director you will have daily contact with High Profile people. Working at a fast pace you will need competent secretarial skills, good speech and presentation along with a flexible and easy going disposition.

DUE TO PROMOTION
An opportunity has arisen with this high-profile group with outstanding track record to work as Office Manager and co-ordinate the activities of one of their subsidiaries. This is an exciting opportunity for a young manager with previous Office Management/Administrative experience. Minimal typing, but good experience of Excel and E-Mail useful. 40 wpm.

VIP's Assistant
If you have circa a year's experience and looking to progress to a role that will interest you, this job offers an excellent opportunity. You will be in the front line of this very important busy interesting life. Using a combination of secretarial and organisational skills here is the answer that would suit someone looking for a varied and brilliant working day. Typing/60 wpm Microsoft.

These are just a few of our current vacancies

ANDERSON HOARE
CHELSEA, HIGH ST KEN, GREEN PARK, CITY
0171 824 8821

Technology Colleges Trust
9 Whitehall, SW1A 2DD

Network Administrator
The TC Trust, an Educational Charity, seeks to appoint an experienced Administrator with special responsibility for the network of schools.

Good inter-personal and organisational skills and an ability to work on one's own initiative are essential, together with experience in the Microsoft Office '95 suite of software, particularly Access.

Salary will be in the region of £15,000 p.a. negotiable.

Part-time Secretary
The Trust also seeks a mature part-time secretary to work for the Director of the Affiliated Schools Unit.

Hours and salary negotiable.

Experience of working in education would be an advantage.

Closing Date for both positions: 17 January 1997.

Interviews to be held during week commencing 27 January 1997.

For further details and an application form, please contact Marilyn Burbidge at the above address or on 0171 839 9339.

PA SECRETARY £18K

Excellent opportunity to join International Information Solutions (CIS) in SW1. To provide full secretarial support in Personnel Director - company secretary, HR & sales role working as part of a friendly team. You must have previous secretarial exp. W4W & Audio prof.

Call Sue 0171 499 9112 or fax your CV to 0171 499 9115 (Recruit Agt)

ADVERTISING
CO

High Profile P.A. to MD. Must be a dynamic, energetic, confident, self-starter with excellent skills in W4W, Excel, E-Mail, and Audio prof. Career path £25K - £30K.

0171 962 2335
(Secretarial Secretary)

'TIME TO ENSURE YOUR FUTURE'
NEW CAREERS FOR AMBITIOUS ADMIN/DTP SECRETARIES

This is an exciting time for you if you are considering making an important career move. Choose from our impressive client base of major companies (large City and West End Corporations and Merchant Banks) that can offer you challenging, worthwhile positions, with the financial package you deserve. Rely on us to provide you with a comprehensive professional service; fully prepare you for all your interviews (providing company literature, job specs and maps, interview and tips).

All clients offer excellent benefits packages these include: free lunch, housing allowance/mortgage subsidy, paid overtime, sick, sports facilities, discount prices on shares, free health care, pension, etc. etc.

A sample of current opportunities:
MAJOR INT. BANK, ADMIN (60%) SECS £21K-£22K
This dynamic City bank seeks two polished and highly competent individuals who seek advancement beyond the normal secretarial role.
PUBLISHING P.A. HIGH PROFILE CO. £22K-BENS
Looking for a proactive P.A. to provide assistance to the MD and the Editorial Director. (Excellent benefits)

TRAINING & CORPORATE FINANCE POWERPOINT/SECS £21K-£22K
Live for the excitement, looking for the "unpredictable" if you thrive in these environments we have plenty of opportunities for you.
YOUNG TEAM SECS CAREERS AND TRAINING £15-18,000-BENS
In career development training, working in a sociable, young, large and forward thinking organisation year on year? We have at least 2-3 clients who may fit your "bill".

Please call to discuss these and other currently available vacancies

Tel: 0171 638 7951
Fax: 0171 638 4129

PARAGON PERSONNEL

MONUMENT

US BANKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR 1997

Major U.S. Banks have opportunities in their prestigious ECA European HQ based just a minute from BP & Tube stations.
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RACING

Breeders call on BHB for more positive leadership

By Richard Evans, RACING CORRESPONDENT

THE outgoing chairman of the Thoroughbred Breeders' Association (TBA), Rhydian Morgan-Jones, is to seek election to the British Horseracing Board (BHB) after fresh rumblings of discontent surfaced yesterday over the leadership and structure of the sport's governing body.

The latest criticism of the BHB emerged at the TBA's annual meeting where members called for more positive leadership and changes to the make-up of the board to counter the overbearing influence of racecourses.

Bob McCreery said: "There seems to be universal agreement that the BHB is not carrying out the leadership racing needs. The issue is how that can be remedied. The fundamental point is that the make-up of the BHB board is wrong and needs to be changed. The board has not shaken down very well and there needs to be change. That is basic; everyone in racing knows that."

Nick Robinson, one of the original BHB directors, said that after four years a review of the BHB's constitution and its industry committee was now due. "Any one at the recent industry committee forum who listened to the three people on the platform—Lord Wakeham, Matthew McCloy and Tristram Rickards—got the strong impression they are out of touch with their constituents."

Lady Burnham, president of the Racehorse Owners' Association, said the BHB had

rather lost its identity and had become sectionally divided because of the increasing power of the racecourses. "The board has lost its original purpose of 11 men good and true working for the whole interest of racing."

Although owners and racecourses are represented on the BHB, along with the Jockey Club, breeders have no direct voice and are represented, along with trainers, jockeys and other groups, via the industry committee, Lord Swaythling is due to stand down as one of the industry committee's directors on the

board in June and Morgan-Jones has told friends he intends to stand for election.

Addressing yesterday's annual meeting, he welcomed the announcement by Lord Wakeham of a review of racing's problems but said that at the end of the consultation there would have to be decisions and actions. "And that is the job of the BHB: it has to have the mandate for leadership to which it has always been entitled, but until now has been either unwilling or unable to assume."

He added: "Our message to the BHB is simple: assume the mantle of leadership and act now to redirect us to a prosperous racing and breeding industry without regard to your sectional interests. Leave those to the industry committee which is well equipped and efficient at handling them."

Earlier, he warned that despite the surge in bloodstock prices at the yearling sales during the autumn "all is not well in the state of British racing and breeding."

"What should concern us in this country about the market trend is that it is being fuelled by foreign buyers against a declining domestic interest. The huge prize-money advantages enjoyed by other racing countries mean they can afford to pay more for racehorses than domestic purchasers can. It follows that the quality of, and with it the interest in, British racing will decline."

Morgan-Jones continued: "It also means that other more affluent breeding countries, and my fear is that Japan is only the tip of the iceberg, will pay more for breeding stock, and thus ultimately our breeding industry will become second rate."

The outgoing chairman concluded: "At risk are not only the substantial revenues enjoyed by government, but also a great British industry and tradition, which is responsible for one in eight of the agricultural workforce with over £2 billion of assets employed, the majority of it by breeders."

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James Willoughby meets a trainer taking the sand by storm



Eyre hopes Wall, who has been suffering from corns, will recapture the sparkle of his earlier days. Photograph: Michael Powell

The benefits of a confident Eyre

Posh holidays are not his style. He would rather see sand under his horses' feet than his own. Les Eyre has few peers when it comes to training all-weather winners. His 28 successes on the sand last year was the second-highest total. Counting the turf, his 78 horses won 75 times and gifted out over £400,000 in take-home pay.

He has brought to the top of the trainers' table a blue-collar ethic no less distinct than his horses' red bridles. He trains not for stockbrokers and landed gentry but for the likes of shop owners, market traders, ordinary folk who spend more time in Barnet than Barbados.

"I would like to have the sort of owner who could spend 50 grand on a yearling, but nobody has come along with that sort of money so far," Eyre said. "I tell people that if Sheikh Mohammed decided to send me seven horses it might spoil the place."

Hambleton House had lain empty for nearly two years after the death of the previous owner, Will Pearce, in June 1992. Eyre arrived two years ago, since when there have been only happy memories.

He had been muddling by with a small string in a cramped yard behind a pub at Mirfield, between Bradford and Huddersfield. Spurred by increasing success, Eyre decided to find a base to expand his operation. He conducted a nationwide search until the day he drove 700 dizzying feet up Sutton Bank in the Vale of York and found the yard which suited his needs. "I wanted to train winners on the Flat and over jumps, all year round, and some great trainers have been here," he said.

When he told of his plans, wisdom had it that the place was too high and too cold to keep horses going in the winter. But, like his new neighbours at the gliding school, Eyre saw the altitude as a launchpad to even greater heights.

"We are 1,300 feet up here. It is very cold and clear and I think it makes the horses' lungs stronger and healthier," he said. "And a lot of them who come here with niggling problems, like bad backs or legs, seem to thrive. But the cold will be the death of me." Hacking and wheezing, Eyre throws a coat over his heavy shoulders and squares up to another

morning. He watches first lot from a Land Rover not a horse. "I gave up riding five stones ago," he said.

His all-weather gallop has failed to live up to its name during the freeze and he takes them to Southwell for fast work. At home, they can only trot by, led by one of Eyre's assistants, Ben Beasley, while in the office the other, Finbar O'Mahony, handles entries and declarations. Both men are former trainers and an integral part of the yard's success.

"The job of trainer is now too big for one man," Eyre said. "You have to delegate. It is no good paying a man to do something then having to do it yourself."

Eyre said he wants to motivate everyone to feel part of the yard's success. His relationship with his assistants, and theirs with the staff, is the same director-manager-worker structure he learned first in business.

Twenty years ago, he was selling kitchens for a company in Halifax when he and a colleague decided they could do it better than the bosses. Nine years later, they sold out for

seven figures and Eyre turned his attention from Formica to four legs. A friend reckons he could still sell sand to the Arabs, but he prefers to win races on the stuff these days.

Eyre is not an all-weather specialist. He has won valuable races on the grass with sprinters like Nigrasine and Sobering Thoughts, stayers like Tethys, hurdlers like Midland Glenn. His 60-box yard overflows with durable, professional racehorses once cast off as delicate and disappointing.

He singles out Wall as the next to benefit from the individual attention he makes his credo. Useful in his younger days but now seven, the gelding came from another trainer who had despaired of persistent hoof problems. "Turns out it was only corns," Eyre said. "His troubles are behind him now, touch wood, and he's off a player's mark."

Eyre will be hoping for further success with this three runners at Wolverhampton today, Celestial Choir, Chemcast and Barrel Of Hope. But if they don't come home in front he will carry on with the same strident purpose. He knows life can be a beach on the sand.

Smyly stands for election

AN INTRIGUING election battle loomed last night after Mark Smyly confirmed that he is standing against Peter Cundell for the presidency of the National Trainers' Federation (NTF). Richard Evans writes.

For the last six years, Smyly has been persuaded to contest next year's election by a number of trainers, dissatisfied with the shoot-from-the-hip approach of Cundell, who has been president of the NTF for the last six years.

"I have been encouraged to stand by a lot of people and have been proposed by Peter Walwyn and seconded by William Jarvis. Although I live near Lambourn, I know many people in the Newmarket area and have a lot of interests in racing."

Smyly added: "I believe in a firm NTF voicing the opinion of everybody and not just the opinions of individuals. It is especially important that the NTF remains a strong unit and argues for a place on the British Horseracing Board."

Smyly trained at Lambourn for 16 years before becoming racing manager to Tony Budge. More recently, he has helped the East Everleigh-based Richard Hannon, one of the trainers who has resigned from the NTF during Cundell's stewardship.

The choice facing the 440 members of the NTF could hardly be more stark. Cundell, who enjoys his role in racing politics, is outspoken and blunt. Smyly, a Prince Charles lookalike, has charm and style.

THUNDER	
1.30 Adriblu	2.30 Lord Sky
1.00 Skourouge	5.00 Ben Secret
1.00 Little T	3.30 Beaumont
2.00 Tea Party	4.00 BARREL OF HOPE (nap)

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 3.30 GOLDEN HADES

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 1.00 Hint Of Victory, 2.00 DOCTOR BRAVIOUS (nap), 2.30 Master Of Passion.

126	4-0432	GOOD TIMES 77 (25/F, F, S)	John D. Romano	8 Feb 9-10-11	8 West (A)	54
<p> <i>Recessed narrator.</i> <i>Dear to teachers.</i> <i>Six-year-olds</i> (F—fall, P—puffed up, U—mooned <i>Wider.</i> <i>B—brought down.</i> <i>S—stepped up.</i> <i>B—reluctant.</i> <i>D—disappointed.</i> <i>Helen's name.</i> <i>Dave</i> <i>and</i> <i>teaching.</i> <i>A B Jerome.</i> <i>F—fall.</i> <i>U—mooned.</i> <i>V—very.</i> <i>U—lost.</i> <i>F—fought.</i> <i>E—Emphatic.</i> </p>						
<p> <i>stern and cautious narrator.</i> <i>IF—without</i> <i>hardships</i> <i>in latest since.</i> <i>Going on which course has won</i> <i>IF—well.</i> <i>good to focus.</i> <i>Acad—U—good.</i> <i>S—soft.</i> <i>good to focus.</i> <i>Other in brackets</i> <i>Trainee.</i> <i>Age and weight.</i> <i>Rather plus any allowance.</i> </p>						

TENNIS

Punishing trip fails to unsettle Henman

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

TIM HENMAN put jet lag and fatigue behind him to progress to the second round of the Sydney International tennis tournament yesterday with victory over Renzo Furlan, the British No.1, arrived in Australia in the early hours before the match, having taken three flights from the Middle East.

He was broken in the first game, but responded well to break Furlan, the Italy Davis Cup player, in the next game and went on to secure a 6-3, 6-4 victory just before midnight local time.

Henman, who rose to No.24 in the world last weekend, said: "I just tried to forget

second game of the match. I felt pretty comfortable. I wanted to keep the momentum going this week."

Henman now faces Sergi Bruguera, from Spain, the former French Open champion, in the second round after he defeated Felix Mantilla, his compatriot, the No.5 seed.

Henman, who was beaten by Bruguera, a clay-court specialist, in their two meetings last year, said: "He is a similar player to Furlan and won't come forward much."

The tournament is providing Henman with ideal preparation for the Australian Open that starts in Melbourne on Monday. That event has been deprived of the services of Andre Agassi, the French No.1, who has withdrawn with back trouble.

Monica Seles, four times the Australian Open champion, will be unable to defend her title in Melbourne because she has a broken finger. Seles, the world's No.2, broke her right ring finger in two places — the finger tip and the knuckle — while warming up for an exhibition tournament last month and has been unable to play since December 4.

Seles won her fourth Australian Open title last year, bringing her incredible match record in the event to a perfect 20. She also won the Australian Open in 1991, 1992 and 1993 before missing the event the next two years after being stabbed during a tournament in Hamburg in April 1993.

"I want so much to return to Australia, where I have so many happy memories and good friends," Seles said. "All I can do is look forward to 1998 with great anticipation."

The broken finger is the latest in a series of injuries that have plagued Seles since she returned to competitive tennis in August 1995.

Results — 44

what I had been through in the past 24 hours. When you are confident and hitting the ball well, you don't think about too much out on the court."

"My concerns before the match were mental and physical. I wasn't sure how I would feel and how focused I would be. Overall, I think it was a good performance. Tennis-wise, I hit the ball well."

Henman, 22, from Oxfordshire, was particularly glad to have bounced back after the potentially vital blow of losing the first game to Furlan, ranked 15 places below him in the world.

He added: "In the first game I had 40-15, but then didn't play particularly well. It was a bad start to the match, but, once I broke back in the

second game, I felt pretty comfortable. I wanted to keep the momentum going this week."

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Wheels of fortune: Berger has reaped extravagant rewards from his 12-year motor racing career without claiming the ultimate prize

Playboy in pursuit of home comforts

Concluding a series on the revival of the Benetton Formula One team, Oliver Holt meets a driver in a personal race against time

They say that Jean Alesi is the insecure one. When there are tears to be shed, he cries, when there is anger to be expressed, he vents it when consolation is needed. It is always his shoulders that the arm slips around. On the other hand, the popular belief is that Gerhard Berger, his Benetton team-mate, can look after himself.

Berger is, after all, the last of the great grand prix playboys: dashing and dynamic, charming and witty, entirely likeable. He is so much his own man that he is the only driver among the leading Formula One personalities who does not have a manager. He is one of the few in the sport who talks frankly, his words unadorned by jargon, unsoftened by the fear of saying the wrong thing.

He is the man who used to play practical jokes on Ayrton Senna, who once put hundreds of frogs in the late Brazilian's room while he was out, and who, during his stays at McLaren and Ferrari, consistently managed to negotiate himself one of the highest salaries in the sport without having the bargaining power of a world title.

Before Berger left Ferrari for Benetton at the end of 1995, though, Jean Todt,

Ferrari's sporting director, and one of the most astute men in Formula One, revealed a different side of the Austrian. "He does not show it like Alesi," Todt said, "but Gerhard needs reassurance, too. He needs to be told how much he is wanted."

As he sat in the Benetton garage during a test at Estoril, in Portugal, last month, Berger, smiling as always, let his guard down for a few minutes. He is starting the second half of a two-year contract with Benetton and admitted that time was running out for him to achieve his lifelong ambition of winning the Formula One world title.

What was even more striking, though, was an admission, by a man who has always seemed so footloose and fancy-free, that when he joined Benetton at the start of last season, he was desperate to settle down, but felt so ill at ease that it affected his performances. Only now that he has come to terms with the change, he said, will he be able to have a last shot at the championship.

"I expected it to be difficult



when I arrived here from Ferrari," Berger said. "When I came here to Estoril for my first test, I had to push myself not to show it, but I felt like a stranger. I just didn't feel at home. But here, it was different."

"It was too late to run away, but it was stopping me doing a good job. On top of that, the car wasn't set up to suit my driving style. The people were nice to me, but I was not one of them and it was just a terrible feeling."

"The older you get, the more you get used to somebody and the more difficult it is to change. If you are a young boy and you get a new

girlfriend, it is easy to adapt, you stay together and you feel fine. But, if you get to 40 or 45 and you start something new, it is so hard to get used to it."

"I just could not get used to it here. It took me half a season and by then it was too late to have any chance of winning the title. Then, suddenly I felt it was turning out OK and now, finally, I feel good. Now, I would not like to go somewhere else."

Like Alesi, Berger failed to win a race last season, but he was robbed of victory in Germany when the Renault engine in his Benetton failed on the last lap and wasted a good chance of a win in the Japanese Grand Prix, the last race of the season, when he attempted an over-ambitious overtaking manoeuvre on Damon Hill.

Berger, who flirted with the idea of retirement after Senna's death in May 1994, is 37 now and, if he does not find a drive with one of the leading four teams when his contract ends at the end of the coming season, he is likely to embrace it more openly.

At the San Marino Grand Prix, in April at Imola — the

site of his worst crash in Formula One, in 1989, when his car exploded in a fireball, and the track where Senna died — he will contest his 200th grand prix, more than any other present driver. His motivation, though, is as fierce as it was when he competed in his first race, in 1984.

"It is still clear in my mind," he said, "that I would not like to do anything more than drive a racing car. As long as it is in your head that you are doing the nicest thing in the world, then you are motivated."

"I feel much fitter today than I did when I was young, but, as a driver, if you get slower, you never feel it. You always think you are quick. I am not doing it for earning money or any ego thing. I am doing it because I love it and for winning. Otherwise, I would not have the motivation."

"I am still trying to win the title, but I am not that convinced I can do it any more. I give everything that I can give, but I am running out of time fast. I don't dream of winning the world championship next season, just of winning as many races as possible. If this dream comes true, then the championship will not be far away."

will not be far away."

RUGBY UNION: JENKINS REPLACES HUMPHREYS AS HOOKER DECIDES NOT TO CONTEST SUSPENSION

Gibbs steps up to captain Wales

BY DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

SCOTT GIBBS, one of four players who have returned from rugby league, to bolster the Wales national side, will lead his country for the first time against the United States in Cardiff on Saturday. Gibbs, the Swansea centre, will take over from the suspended Jonathan Humphreys.

Humphreys, the captain in Wales's past 13 internationals, has decided not to appeal against the week-long ban imposed after his disciplinary hearing. Cardiff's Heineken Cup semi-final defeat by Brive on Sunday. "I am mindful of the need to set an example and will accept the adjudicator's decision, even though it is very painful to take," he said yesterday.

Humphreys, 27, was sent off

for rugby's equivalent of a professional foul, having earlier received a yellow card for his involvement in a forward confrontation. His decision not to appeal leaves Wales able to prepare properly for Saturday, with Garin Jenkins, of Swansea, stepping up for his 31st cap and Barry Williams, the Neath hooker, returning to the replacements.

Ieuan Evans and Gareth Llewellyn, two former Wales captains, are among the XV, but Gibbs, who has played in three of Wales's four internationals this season, is a more progressive appointment. "I have used this as an opportunity for someone to gain personal development from the situation, rather than to go for a tried and trusted captain," Kevin Bowring, the coach, said.

"I have been impressed with

Scott's focus, attitude and discipline. His contribution has been impressive since he returned from rugby league, both on and off the field."

Gibbs also has youth on his side — he is 26 later this month and would be a viable alternative if Humphreys were not to return for the opening five nations' championship match, against Scotland on January 18. The captaincy is also an indication of how swiftly Gibbs has become a cornerstone of the side as opposed to, for example, Neil Jenkins — who is captain of Pontypridd but is being played out of position at full back.

"My job now is to lead us to victory and thrust us into the five nations' championship on the back of a good performance," Gibbs said. "There is a responsibility on the shoulders of every player and, as

captain, that responsibility is no different."

"This is a personal landmark for me, although I have been assured it is a temporary position because of Jonathan's suspension; but it is a chance for me to develop as a Welsh captain in the longer term."

Meanwhile, Llanelli are to hold an extraordinary meeting on January 29 after the collapse of the financial structure intended to carry them through the first season of full professionalism. They will be among the first division clubs eager to hear today from the Welsh Rugby Union the results of a specially-commissioned independent report on club finances, which may help them to explain to their members at the end of the month how they plan to sustain their existence for the rest of this season.

Greening attracts offers from rich clubs

THE Gloucester board of management will discuss on Monday the possibility of a substantial financial offer for Phil Greening, their young hooker, who won his first England cap as a replacement against Italy in November (David Hands writes).

There is no likelihood of Greening, who is Gloucester-born and bred, leaving the club halfway through a season vital to the club's first division survival. Neither club officials nor the player himself would countenance it, but the reality for Gloucester, who have no wealthy individual investing money in them, is that the sale of so promising a player would help to sustain the playing side of the club as a whole.

Greening, 21, is said to have had offers from the four wealthy London clubs, as well as Newcastle. He is England's replacement hooker, behind Mark Regan, a position that will be confirmed today when England name their training squad for the five nations' championship match against Scotland on February 1.

Adedayo Adebayo, the England wing, returns for Bath against Swansea tonight after recovering from concussion. He will be joined in the team by Andy Robinson, Bath's new coach, and Graham Dawe, who has recovered from an elbow injury sustained nearly two months ago.

Home run for Dodgers?

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

ONE of American baseball's great teams, the Dodgers, is up for sale. Peter O'Malley, president of the Dodgers and son of the man who, in 1957, moved the team from Brooklyn to Los Angeles, said this week that it was "the right time to sell". He added: "The time is approaching when a family cannot support a Major League baseball team. It is the time of corporate ownership. Family ownership is probably a dying breed."

O'Malley's unexpected announcement created excitement in the New York borough of Brooklyn, where old Dodgers fans were given hope that the team might return to the east coast of the United States. The Dodgers' departure left a terrible void

and the O'Malley family took much heat. The elder O'Malley became known as Peter "Sonofabitch" O'Malley, and to this day people say that the borough has not been the same since the old stadium in Flatbush fell dark.

Marty Adler, who runs the Brooklyn Dodger Hall of Fame, said: "I'm so happy, I can't believe this is happening. Bringing 'em back to Brooklyn." There was no proof of a financial offer to do that, but the asking price for the Dodgers is likely to be around the \$200 million mark.

When the Dodgers were based in Brooklyn, they won the World Series once and ten National League titles. Leading players included Jackie Robinson, Duke Snider,

Sandy Koufax and Pee Wee Reese. Since moving out west, however, the team has done even better, scooping five World Series titles and nine National League pennants.

Such was the myth that attached to Brooklyn Dodgers that, in the recent presidential election campaign, Robert Dole, the Republican party candidate, mistakenly referred to the team. Dole was lampooned for being so out of touch that he did not know the Dodgers had moved to Los Angeles. Now his gaffe may, perhaps, be seen as prescient.

O'Malley's comments about the impossibility of families running baseball teams was interpreted as a caustic reference to the vast salaries demanded by leading players.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Arrivals bolster Salford ambition

NOT all the overseas players flooding the English game possess the pedigree that John Cartwright will bring to Salford Reds in their first season in the Stones Super League (Christopher Irvine writes). Cartwright, the Australian second row forward, was reunited on his arrival at the Willows yesterday with Andy Platt, an adversary from the 1992 World Cup.

Cartwright, 30, and Platt, 33, the former Great Britain prop, will bring valuable experience to a relatively young Salford side. To capture a player still regarded as being among the best props in the

world is a sign of the ambition at Salford.

Cartwright — who has played for Penrith for 12 seasons — has a contract for a year with a 12-month option. Wigan wanted Platt to return to them in a coaching capacity, but Platt felt that he played some of his best rugby at Auckland Warriors last season and he has a two-year deal at Salford.

Cartwright, who made seven appearances for Australia, has no regrets about leaving a divided game in his home country. "Hopefully, it will be sorted out in the next 12 months, otherwise the game

could be in a bit of trouble," he said.

Andy Gregory, the Salford coach, said: "I wish I had a pound for everyone who has said we'll struggle this year. We're getting a decent squad together, we haven't finished yet, and I think we'll surprise a few."

Kelvin Skerrett, 30, Platt's former Wigan colleague, has joined Halifax Blue Sox until the end of March. Before committing itself for the rest of the season, the club wants to see how Skerrett, who has had surgery on his ankles, performs in the early rounds of the Silk Cut Challenge Cup.

One man, three camels, 1,000 miles too far

Travel, people tell me, broadens the mind, but for some time I've had a pet theory that travel actually does the opposite. Some of the duller people I have ever met turn out to be the most intrepid of travellers, great globe-trotters who never managed to get a life but got a long-hand destination instead.

No prizes, then, for guessing that Benedict Allen is not my kind of chap: nor *Skeleton Coast* (BBC2) my kind of programme. Allen, you see, is the worst kind of traveller, the one who insists on showing you his holiday snaps. "I wanted to film it myself," he told us grandly, "without the intrusion of a camera crew." That's right: no director to tell him he's beginning to sound like an encyclopedia, no camera-operator to make the whole thing look pretty, no sound technician to muffle the heavy breathing. "Filmed entirely by Benedict Allen" boasted the end

credits. I guess that makes it his fault then.

Long gone are the days when "because it's there" was sufficient excuse to get the rucksack out of the attic. What the modern multimedia explorer needs is an idea sufficiently offbeat to get television interested and perhaps a publisher or two. Allen's idea was to travel the 1,000 miles of the Skeleton Coast of Namibia, an area already crawling with wildlife documentary-makers, in the company of three camels. They bought it.

First up, inevitably, was choosing your camel time, a sequence that took up so much of last night's programme that it made me wonder whether there is sufficient material for six programmes. Anyway, Allen got his camels and a collection of matching bruises and I warmed to the documentary which smashed the camels with a well aimed blow of the knee. "We may make a critic out of him yet

Eventually, after an awful lot of self-conscious grooming in the bath and mock introspection in the desert — "things die out here, I'm going to die out here if I don't get these camels in order" — we were off. The Orange River was behind us now it was just Allen and his three camels, and Tony, the warden the Namibian Government had insisted came too: Adrian, a photographer friend, and Henry, driver of a so-far unseen support vehicle. As Allen had promised us, the Namib Desert was already teeming with life.

So, too, were the spectacular gardens that provided the centrepiece for Geoff Hamilton's *Paradise Gardens* (BBC2). But any notion that sufficient time might have elapsed since Hamilton's death last summer for this series to be viewed dispassionately was quickly dispelled. A caption reminded us that Hamilton died

just before the series was completed and that those parts of the script left unrecorded had now been added by Tony, Geoff's twin brother.

But if that wasn't enough to bring on an unseasonal attack of hay fever, it quickly became clear that the subject was Hamilton's last series was about the garden as a earthly paradise, as an escape from the brutal demands of the

modern world. Lines such as "if we're going to cope with the modern machine, we all need a safety valve" acquired a poignancy that he can never have intended.

But somewhere along the line, the programme lost sight of its target. Of the three gardens Hamilton visited, only one — a glorious back garden in Cardiff — offered the genuine "haven of peace and contentment" that he had been talking about. The others, an exquisite cottage garden in Oxfordshire tended by the same couple for decades and a woodland garden in an Anglican parish, seemed so far removed from the modern world as to be irrelevant. But as fate had it, in one Hamilton touched gently on death and in the other discussed God (via a visit to the cemetery, actually) and suddenly relevance didn't much matter any more. After all, the anti-histamine.

Things got a little jollier thank-

fully, with the return of Harry Enfield and Chums (BBC1). But perhaps not as jolly as they once might have been. The main problem is that the chums, Paul Whitehouse and Kathy Burke, are almost better known now than Enfield is. One possible solution would be for *The Fast Show*, Whitehouse's principal vehicle, to launch a takeover bid for Enfield, but that is probably far too straightforward for the world of light entertainment.

The fact remains, however, that the shows have very similar formats and, on the evidence of last night, a growing overlap in characters. Julio Geordio may be a Colombian footballer playing for Newcastle United, but his increasingly Geordie dialogue was just a *teletalk* away from *The Fast Show*'s Channel 9. Others, such as the toddlers, owe their inspiration

closer to home. After all, Kevin the teenager is still very funny, so why not his three-year-old brother? I don't know, but he wasn't. Still, Mr Dead, the Talking Corpse, was.

Back on BBC2, *Grown Ups* looked a promising idea but it may take a few weeks to see whether it has been well enough executed. I have a nasty, but not irreversible, feeling that it has not.

With the exception of Pippa Haywood, who is in everything at the moment, most of the faces involved are unfamiliar — which is a good and commendable thing. So, too, is a comedy about a group of university friends now in their thirties. My doubts though centre on the cleverness and wit, or otherwise, of Paul Makin's scripts and on the directing of Angela de Chastell Smith. It may be early days, but both the "sit" and the "com" were moving rather slowly last night. Just like those camels.

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

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CHOICE

Hollywood Loves (ITV, 9.00pm (not ITV/CINE))

Should you be thinking of moving to the film capital, and finding yourself in need of a partner, this programme is full of useful advice. The good news for men, according to a dating agency, is that there are more beautiful women in Los Angeles than anywhere else in the world. The bad news is that a male model is that the women do not just date you — they date your job, your pocket-book and your car. "If you are a woman trying to pull a man, listen to Denise Gilbert. As Ms Fitz USA, she knows all the angles. This latest collection of slickly-edited soundbites — comes from the company responsible for series on Hollywood's men, women, children and pets. Like its predecessors, *Hollywood Loves* is brash, superficial, vulgar and horribly fascinating — a fair description of Hollywood itself.

Common As Muck (BBC1, 9.30pm)

The Lancashire binner are back, but as William Ivory's drama deservedly enters its second series it seems that they might not be emptying bins much longer. Property developers have their sights on the yard and the men are forced to think up new ways to earn a living. They also have to do without Edward Woodward's New, who has reached retirement age. But even as he says his emotional farewell, you can bet that the show will not dump one of its best characters. A feature of Ivory's scripts is that they can encompass a range of moods without this seeming incongruous. *Common As Muck* is fundamentally a comedy and there is plenty of knockabout tonight as the gang tries its hand at window cleaning. But there is pathos and sentimentality, and darker elements as well. It makes a satisfying mix.

Trouble At The Top: Freddie's Back (BBC2, 9.00pm)

Freddie is Sir Freddie Laker, trying to make a comeback 16 years after the collapse of his pioneering venture in out-price air travel. Although well into his seventies, and with a serious operation not far behind him, he is as buoyant as ever. His big idea this time is an airline that will take British holidaymakers to the Florida state. And in contrast to his past activity he is going unarmoured. Passengers will sit in leather seats, with individual video screens, and eat off china plates. That, at least, is the idea. As Mary FitzPatrick's engrossing film reveals, the launch of Laker Mark Two is so dogged with mishaps of every sort that it is a wonder anything got off the ground. You almost feel sorry for Sir Freddie, but he battles on regardless and even in his lowest moments an optimistic smile rarely leaves his face.

ER: Dr Carter, I Presume (Channel 4, 10.00pm)

The Chicago hospital drama does not hang on Dr Carter's life. He is a former patient of his third season when we are plunged into young Dr Carter's first day as a surgical intern. Jeanie's discovery that she is HIV-positive and rumours of the hospital being earmarked for closure. The last can be quickly dismissed. If the place shut, it would be the end of the series. As there are 23 episodes after this one, it is a fair assumption that the rumours are no more than a plot device. Carter's baptism is a predictable descent into Hell, though charted with all the gritty realism that ER can muster. And so to the end of the series, whether to tell the authorities about her condition, makes for moments of sober reflection amid the bustle and frenzy, underlined as always by a manically restless camera. Peter Waymark



Freddie Laker flying again (9.50pm)

TROUBLE AT THE TOP First of a six-part series following businessman over a year in their hectic lives, beginning with Sir Freddie Laker as he prepares to launch Laker Airline, a transatlantic service between Britain and Florida (T) (56137)

10.30 PARTY POLITICAL BROADCAST: A Liberal Democrat (175224)

10.35 NEWSNIGHT with Peter Snow (T) (435088)

11.20 THIS LIFE Drama series (T) (471663)

12.05am-1.15am DARTS: WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (711924)

BBC1

6.00am BUSINESS BREAKFAST (48563)

7.00 BBC BREAKFAST NEWS (43311)

9.00 BREAKFAST NEWS EXTRA (400785)

9.30 ALL OVER THE SHOP (387735)

9.40 KILROY (126731)

10.30 CAN'T COOK, WON'T COOK (83311)

11.00 NEWS (T) and weather (560683)

11.05 THE REALLY USEFUL SHOW (518940)

11.40 SMILLIE'S PEOPLE (534733)

12.00 NEWS (T) and weather (715882)

12.05pm INCOGNITO (536886)

12.30 CALL MY BLUFF (402022)

12.55 THE WEATHER SHOW (754408)

1.00 NEWS (T) and weather (53798)

1.30 REGIONAL NEWS (4411782)

1.40 NEIGHBOURS (T) (742677)

2.05 POLICE RESCUE (807587)

2.50 HOLIDAY OUTINGS (731808)

3.00 PUT IT TO THE TEST (1663)

3.30 PLAYDAYS (302740)

4.10

4.30 Popeye and Son (1810155) **4.35 The Wild House** (702852) **5.00 Newsworld** (T) (817507)

5.10 Blue Peter (T) (102154)

5.35 NEIGHBOURS (T) (718175)

6.00 NEWS (T) and weather (355)

6.30 REGIONAL NEWS (311)

7.00 A QUESTION OF SPORT Johnnie Walker, Steve Backley, Peter Ebdon, Tim Hendren and John Higgins (T) (62721)

7.30 TOMORROW'S WORLD Includes an innovative head-mounted sensor device giving blind people a view of the world, and a submarine designer's latest creation, which he hopes will revolutionise underwater tourism (T) (565)

8.00 HOW DO THEY DO THAT? Eamonn Holmes and Esther McVey reveal how massive, show-stopping stunts can be achieved (344708)

8.55 PARTY POLITICAL BROADCAST by the Liberal Democrats (T) (125412)

9.00 NEWS (T) and weather (1309)

9.30 COMMON AS MUCK The first in a new six-part series finds the binner gathering to give New a good retirement send-off, fully aware that their business is under threat and they may have to find new ways to survive. With Edward Woodward (T) (517882)

10.25 THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH The backstage chaos that ensued throughout last year's Olympic games (566407)

11.30 FILM: School Ties (1993) starring Chris O'Donnell, Matt Damon and Brendan Fraser. A Jewish student enrolls at an elite high school where he has to lie about his faith to escape taunting - from self-harmful bigots. Directed by Robert Minkoff (210882)

1.10am FILM: Signpost to Murder (1964, b/w) starring Joanne Woodward and Stuart Whitman. A convicted murderer escapes from an asylum and seeks refuge in the house of a lonely young woman, where he convinces her he is innocent and sane. Directed by George Englund (4758557)

2.25 WEATHER (1081977)

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HITV

6.00am GMTV (1920885)

9.25 WIN, LOSE OR DRAW (545755)

9.55 REGIONAL NEWS (565115)

10.00 THE TIME, THE PLACE (5217)

10.30 THIS MORNING (5341555)

12.20pm REGIONAL NEWS (7162855)

12.30 NEWS (T) and weather (452717)

12.55 SHORTLAND STREET (4032408) **1.25 Home and Away** (T) (20410408) **1.50 Afternoon Live** (7424341) **2.20 Vanessa** (T) (2570321) **2.50 Afternoon Live** (562895)

3.20 NEWS (5652325)

3.25 REGIONAL NEWS (5554332)

3.30 TOTVS TV (594451) **3.40 The Ebbes** New series (3.50) **The Little Mermaid** (302324) **4.15 The Sylvester and Tweety Mysteries** (1804585) **4.40 Youth New series** (5072804)

5.10 CELEBRITY SQUARES (730750)

5.40 NEWS (T) and weather (324952)

6.00 HOME AND AWAY (T) (1162750)

6.25 HTV NEWS (T) (40137)

7.00 EMERGENCY (T) (1040)

7.30 CORONATION STREET (T) (653)

8.00 DES O'CONNOR TONIGHT Tonight's guest include Sir Anthony Hopkins, Anthea Turner, Antonio Banderas and Freddie Starr (5893)

As HTV West except:

12.55pm-1.25 A COUNTRY PRACTICE (4032408)

5.10-5.40 SHORTLAND STREET (8280750)

6.25-7.00 CENTRAL NEWS (440137)

10.45 CRIME STALKER (268069)

11.45 BEYOND REALITY (802156)

12.00am COLLINS AND MACONIS'S MOVIE CLUB (5544608)

12.50 FILM: FIRST MONDAY IN OCTOBER (1981) A comedy starring Bill Clayburgh and Walter Matthau, directed by Ronald Neame (651373)

2.35 THE CHART SHOW (736915)

3.30 DEAR NICK (25557)

4.30 CENTRAL JOBBING '97 (1705644)

5.20 ASIAN EYE (5684064)

As HTV West except:

12.55pm-1.25 A COUNTRY PRACTICE (4032408)

5.10-5.40 HOME AND AWAY (8280750)

6.00 MERIDIAN TONIGHT (427)

6.30-7.00 BIRDWATCH WITH CHRIS PACKHAM (779)

10.45 THE MERIDIAN MATCH (268069)

11.45 ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS (255563)

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6.00 MERIDIAN TONIGHT (427)

6.30-7.00 BIRDWATCH WITH CHRIS PACKHAM (779)

10.45 THE MERIDIAN MATCH (268069)

11.45 ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS (255563)

5.00am FREEZE (12977)

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FOOTBALL 44

Vega signs for Tottenham in £3.7 million deal

SPORT

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 8 1997

MOTOR RACING 45

Wheels of fortune still turning for playboy of the track



Hill resigns as supporters plan matchday protest

Forest tumbling towards turmoil

By RICHARD HOBSON

THE troubles of Nottingham Forest deepened yesterday when Alan Hill, the general manager, ended his 25-year association with the club and walked out of the City Ground. He accused the shareholders who blocked a takeover bid on Monday night of putting their own interests before the club's and offered a warning to Stuart Pearce, the caretaker player-manager, about the pitfalls of assembling a successful staff.

As Hill, hitherto one of the most welcoming faces at the club, highlighted the spiralling decline that has sent Forest to nineteenth place in the FA Carling Premiership, supporters began to organise protests to be staged at the home game against Chelsea on Saturday.

On Monday night more than 50 supporters shouted abuse at shareholders leaving the extraordinary meeting after declining to give the necessary 75 per cent backing to an offer from a local

consortium, headed by Sandy Anderson, to buy the club. Anderson would have made £13 million available to Pearce, but there would have been no immediate cash for shareholders.

The club must now wait until next month before considering a submission from a second consortium, which includes Nigel Wray, the man whose money has transformed Saracens rugby football club, and Irving Scholar, the former Tottenham Hotspur chairman.

They would inject £15 million — in the form of an £11 million payment and a £4 million loan — straightaway, but also offer £13.5m to each shareholder who decided to sell his stake, bought for £1.

Hill will be able to retain his own share even though he is becoming an assistant to Frank Clark, in charge at Forest until three weeks ago, but now manager at Manchester City. Hill voted in favour of the Anderson bid, and confirmed that the shareholders' decision helped to

swing the balance towards him accepting an offer that Clark made three days ago.

He said: "The 79 who voted against [Hill] were in favour of the good of the club, then fair enough. If, as I think, they voted for their own gain, then it is a sad state of affairs. I want to keep my share, but if any money comes from it, I will give it back to the club for youth development."

Anderson said: "We wanted all of the money to go to the club, but some of the shareholders wanted it to go into their pockets. They obviously have different principles."

Police are already bracing themselves for a difficult afternoon on Saturday. Chief Superintendent Eddie Curtis, the divisional commander responsible for football policing, said: "It is a high-profile game, we are aware of issues surrounding the bids and will take those into account."

When news broke last September that the club would be sold, it seemed unthinkable that the issue would remain unresolved in the new year. It will now outlast the pantomimes of *Dick Whittington* and *Peter Pan* that are about to finish their runs at the city's two theatres. Indeed, only the resurgence of the side in the five games since Pearce assumed the reins from Clark has prevented the issue degenerating further.

Hill, though, became the first man to cast doubt on Pearce when he said: "I have the impression that he did not want me. If he is going to take the job permanently, he will want his own people around him, but he needs experience as well. Where young managers make the mistake is by bringing in their friends, but without experience in the administrative side, they fall by. I hope he has the good sense to realise that."

He criticised the board for removing Fred Reacher as chairman after the annual meeting last October, citing that decision as "the first mistake". Reacher appeared relaxed yesterday as he sat at the back of the trophy room where Hill spoke to the press. In contrast, Irving Korn, his successor, cut a distressed figure after the meeting on Monday, barely able to read a prepared statement calling for a swift resolution to the issue.

Pearce appears to be thriving on the challenge and is likely to accept the manager's post for the remainder of the season. "The extra responsibility has not affected my game so far," he said, denying that Nigel Clough, on loan from City, would be his assistant. "Losing Alan is a real blow and I am surprised he thought I did not want him. As for the takeover, I try to distance myself from what is going on behind the scenes. That is becoming more difficult with each day."



Pearce, left, and Wray are at the centre of Forest intrigue



Anderson transfers interest

By JASON NISSE

SANDY ANDERSON, the rail tycoon who supports Rangers, yesterday said that he was pulling out of the battle for Nottingham Forest after his £13 million consortium bid failed to win enough shareholder support at an extraordinary meeting on Monday.

This leaves the way open for a rival bid from a group including Nigel Wray, the owner of Saracens rugby club, Irving Scholar, the former chairman of Tottenham Hotspur, and Nick Leslau, Wray's business partner at the property developer, Burford. They are to unveil an offer to pay £11 million into the club immediately with an additional £4 million as a loan, which will be voted on in three weeks.



Anderson's bid team included leading London and Nottingham businessmen and was backed by the merchant bank, SBC Warburg. "If I'm not wanted, I'll go and find somewhere that I am

wanted," Anderson said. "When I was at school, £13 million was more than £11 million."

The decision by a significant minority of Forest's 209 shareholders to reject a certain offer in favour of a lower bid not yet on the table apparently hinged on what proportion of the shares was to be left in their hands.

The Anderson team said that it would take 95 per cent of the company, while Wray's group said it would only take 80 per cent and leave the rest with the present shareholders. With £10 million of debts and losses put at £3 million a year, neither side thinks that Forest is in very good health financially.

However, the Wray team also hinted at a flotation later this season. City financiers who have looked at Forest's books think that this is impossible. "My local golf club has better accounting systems," said one banker said.

Other possible bids, from Grant Bovey, the video entrepreneur, and a consortium of investors from the United States, have also been mentioned. That Nigel Wray, a cricket and rugby enthusiast, should be interested in Forest is an indication of the excitement that the City has for national sports. Celtic, Manchester United and Caspian, which owns Leeds United, were among the dozen best-performing shares in 1996 and Sunderland and West Bromwich Albion stormed ahead on their flotations. Southampton, Newcastle United and Coventry City have all said that they are coming to the market.



From left, Sir Richard, Border, Hughes and Tomu, the successful bowler, right, congratulate Drummond on her catch

Atherton swallows Drumm stick

From MICHAEL HENDERSON IN AUCKLAND

IT NEVER rains on Michael Atherton, the England captain, at the moment, but it absolutely tips it down on his head. He went to bed on Monday afternoon jet lagged, woke up in the early hours of Tuesday morning, was unable to sleep throughout the rest of a wretched night, went to the gym just to pass the time, and never got above half-awake all day.

With a certain weariness, he pottered along to the Ericsson Stadium, the home of Auckland Warriors rugby league team, to take part in a benefit match under floodlights for Danny Morrison, the New Zealand fast bowler who was a team-mate of Atherton's at Lancashire in 1992. Perhaps he should never have left his hotel room, because he was caught in the deep by the only woman playing in the match.

It was not a proper match by any accepted standards. Bowlers walked up to the stumps off three paces, fielders stopped the ball with their feet, and a cast list that included Sir Richard Hadlee, Allan Border, Merv Hughes and Aravinda de Silva was turning out for a lark.

Atherton, slogging out in a manner contrary to his natural game, gave a catch in the deep to Emily Drummond, 25, a member of the New Zealand women's cricket team. The successful bowler was Ofisa

Tomu, one of the rugby league players in the motley gathering.

It was no fun for Atherton, but provided tremendous entertainment for the crowd. Supplied with their Danny Morrison "duck-callers", a convincing-sounding mouth-piece named after one of the international king of the scoreless innings, the spectators quack-quacked the England captain back to the dressing-room. It really was a bit of a circus and, for those few

Simon Barnes 46
Taylor's trials 46

moments, Atherton wore the reddest nose.

He is not downcast about life far from it. Atherton looks and sounds healthy and happy, even in these dark days when he might be excused a touch of self-doubt. "I am thoroughly enjoying my cricket," he said, "and I'm looking forward to the New Zealand part of the winter tour. It is a pleasant place and the people are friendly. It should be a good trip."

As for his batting form, which deserted him in Zimbabwe, he is concerned but not alarmed. "There is no magic formula to putting it right except a good, strong attitude and hard work," he said.

"I've not been playing well for a year now and there are

technical problems to address, but I'm working hard at correcting some faults. It won't be for want of trying."

As Atherton prepared for his evening's light entertainment, other members of the England party went up-river on a boat. After two days off, they practise today at Eden Gardens before travelling to New Plymouth tomorrow for the one-day match against an Invitation XI on Friday.

For one night, then, Drummond became a star of sorts — always accepting that, to be caught by a woman in a beer match, amounts to "humiliation". According to Barbara Daniels, the vice-captain of the England women's team and executive director of the Women's Cricket Association, Atherton should feel no shame.

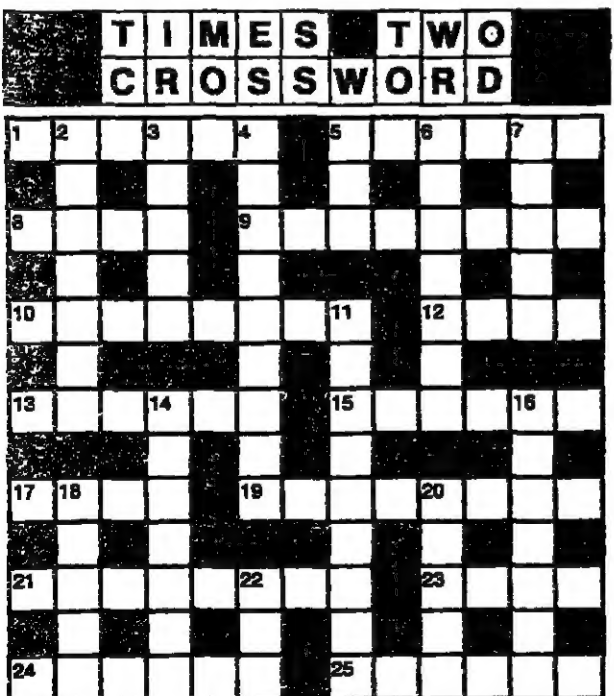
"On her day, Emily is one of the best women's players in

the world," she said. "We played against her in the 1993 World Cup, which we won, and last summer, when New Zealand came over here and beat us."

"Since the World Cup she has been devastating teams virtually on her own. She is a powerful stroke-maker, a more than useful swing bowler and has a good pair of hands."

Drummond said: "I suppose it was unlucky the catch went to me. It wouldn't have mattered if it had been someone else. It's a nice honour to catch out Mike Atherton, but I misjudged the ball and nearly wore it in the gob."

"I sort of feel sorry for him. He hasn't been the happiest chap out there today and I haven't seen him smiling much, but he's probably got a lot on his mind at the moment."



No 985

ACROSS
1 From Scandinavia (4)
5 Ready for marriage (4)
6 Very keen, desirous (4)
9 Aggressively active (5)
10 Serious, painful (4)
12 Most make game sound (4)
13 Off's kingdom (4)
15 Reach destination (4)
17 Hideous (4)
19 Tempting, alluring (5)
21 Oil-rich water off Britain (5)
23 Fruit-a coveted job (4)
24 Taken by thief (4)
25 Stupid talk (4)

DOWN
2 Head-side of coin (7)
3 Move swiftly to avoid (5)
4 Reach maturity (4,2,3)
5 Nothing (3)
6 Meat trader (7)
7 V Ulyanov pseudonym (5)
11 Plastic money, with microchip (5,3)
14 Cut glass sort of ball, Palace (7)
16 Risky enterprise (7)
18 Tile mortar (5)
20 Bay of Naples island (5)
22 Err morally (3)

SOLUTION TO NO 984
ACROSS: 1 ENSA 3 Official 5 Vary 9 Baldness 11 Sunday best 14 Greedy 15 Arches 17 Fifth helmet 20 Baritone 21 Tie 22 Enhanced 23 Uper
DOWN: 1 Envisage 2 Sprimer 4 Shabby 5 Indiscreet 6 Hex 7 Dusk 10 Hard-bitten 12 Thumbs-up 13 As-it were 16 Chance 18 Able 19 Mr WH

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 980
In association with BRITISH MIDLAND
ACROSS: 6 Fragile 7 Clump 9 Lion 10 Lantern 11 Curry favour 14 Cold comfort 17 Tensile 19 Sabre 21 Yearn 22 Aridity
DOWN: 1 Sans 2 Historic 3 Medley 4 Scan 5 Barefoot 6 Fil 8 Fenury 11 Caleslaw 12 Acoustic 13 Scatty 15 May/day 16 Lely 18 Iona 20 Blip
14 PRIZE of a return ticket travelling economy class to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLANDS domestic or international network is R Fernandez, Kenley, Surrey.
2nd PRIZE of a return ticket to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLANDS domestic network is J E Moore, Ickleham, East Sussex.
The winners of Times Two Crossword 974 were: 1st PRIZE - R G Rhodes, Littlehampton, New Romney; 2nd PRIZE - P Kennedy, Coleraine, County Londonderry. All flights subject to availability.

Villeneuve puts brake on Hill's title defence

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

JACQUES VILLENEUVE, of Canada, who finished runner-up to Damon Hill in the Formula One world championship last season, has dismissed Hill's chances of similar success in 1997 and believes that this time he will go one better and take the title. Because Hill is now with a new team, TWR Arrows, Villeneuve does not rate his chances so highly. Last season, with Villeneuve threatening to pounce, the title went to a final, thrilling race in Japan, which Hill won.

Villeneuve yesterday told BBC Radio 5 Live: "I don't think he's going to be an opponent, but he is very good. It's just I don't think the whole package is ready to win — although I'm sure they could surprise us once in a while."

"I am going in with the championship in mind. There is only one spot better I can go and I will have to work hard to make sure I get that spot."

Villeneuve has already tried out his new car, which has been adapted, with several changes suggested by him. He believes that the tough-

est competition will come from Heinz-Harald Frentzen, his team-mate, and Michael Schumacher's Ferrari.

"Heinz will be a tough adversary. I'm pretty sure Michael Schumacher will be very tough to beat as well, and you never know what's going to happen with the McLaren and the Benetton, so it's going to be a tough championship," he said.

"From another team, Ferrari will be the opposition, the one we will have to work against."

Villeneuve said that, if he did manage to win the title, he would not spend much time dwelling on his achievement. "It would be great," he said, "but, a week later, you would forget about it and think about the season ahead."

"It's what happened after winning the Indy 500 and the IndyCar championship. You can't just sit on what you have done for months, and live on that."

Hill's new Arrows car is to be unveiled at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham tomorrow.

Weather holds sport in unrelenting grip

By JOHN GOODBODY

BOTH the Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final games scheduled to be played last night were postponed as the severe weather continued to take its toll of sporting events. The match between Stockport County and Southampton was called off yesterday morning after a severe overnight frost had left the Edgeley Park pitch unplayable. The other tie, between Ipswich Town and Leicester City, was postponed on Monday.

John Saintry, Stockport's assistant manager, said that Richard Poulain, the referee, took only 30 seconds to make his decision. Saintry added that Graeme Souness, the Southampton manager, who last Saturday was furious that their FA Cup game at Reading had been allowed to go ahead, "did not push for a decision one way or the other. Nobody swayed anyone and Graeme was happy to accept the referee's ruling."

Racing has again been badly affected by snow and frost. The meetings at Kelso and Plumpton today have been abandoned, making it the

tenth successive day that there has been no turf action.

The prospects for jump racing tomorrow already look bleak. The meeting at Wincanton has been abandoned and there will be an inspection at Wetherby early today. The bookmaking industry, which says that it lost £1 million during Christmas week, now estimates that it is losing £500,000 a week.

The President's Potter, due to start tomorrow at Rye Golf Club, has been postponed. The amateur event, for members of the Oxford and Cambridge Golfing Society, will now take place from February 21 to 24.

Held early each year, the Potter is often affected by bad weather. The last time it was cancelled was 1978, but, as recently as 1993, the final was abandoned because of high winds after only five holes had been played.

Clifford Weight, the secretary of the society, said: "There are three inches of snow on some parts of the fairways, so it would be impossible not to lose the ball. The forecast is bad. No thaw is due."

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